THE ROLE OF TEACHERS’ EXPECTATIONS ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK MALES

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
BY
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MUNCIE, INDIANA

May 2017
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

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Dean of Graduate School  Date

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

MAY 2017
I want to dedication this research to Black males everywhere. I pray that you have risen above adversity and are productive, contributing, citizens in our diverse society. I especially dedicate this work to my sons (Gary, Jr., Princeton Kyle, and Keith), my grandson (Langston Scott), and all my nephews, you are the inspiration and motivation behind this work and my prayer is that educators throughout our world will be intentional in establishing positive and encouraging interactions with all students, especially our Black males. Also, it is my prayer that educators everywhere will set and preserve high expectations for Black male students, teaching each of them to strive for their fullest potential and beyond.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first give praise to God for blessing me in all my endeavors, especially my academia. I thank my parents, Betty Cheatham-Harvey and Dorris Allen Cheatham. To my mother, Betty Harvey, thank you for being my greatest supporter and helper. I could not have made it this far in my educational and professional goals if it was not for you watching my children, cooking meals, and supporting me through your unconditional love.

To my father, the late Dorris Cheatham, thank you for pushing me academically and challenging me to obtaining the next level and the next degree. Thank you for making college a pre-requisite to whom I will become.

To my wonderful children, Ashley, Gary, Princeton, and Langston, thank you for accompanying me on this “Life-Long-Learner” adventure! I pray that my dedication to education has or will impact your lives in such a way, that you will refuse to settle for minimal achievements, but that you each will strive to your individual levels of excellence. I pray that God will continue to richly bless each of you and shower you with His Favor.

To my family, I love you and I appreciate you for putting up with my educational antics of correcting your grammar and always to trying to be the “Teacher” in all areas. I love you and thank God for blessing me with such great supporters. To my friend and confidant, Eric, you have been with me from the very beginning of my doctorate program. Thank you. Thank you for pushing me and for understanding me.

To Dr. Marilyn Quick, my committee chair, thank you for all your help and support. I greatly appreciate your time spent meeting with me and the endless edits. God really has blessed me with you. You have been very supportive, encouraging, and made me feel like “Yes I Can!”
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accomplish this ultimate goal! You are the all-time BEST! A special thank you to my doctoral committee, your time, interest, and support is most appreciated.
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ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Role of Teachers’ Expectations on the Perceptions of Black Males

STUDENT: Dea L. Moore-Young

DEGREE: Doctor of Education

COLLEGE: Teachers College

DATE: May 2017

PAGES: 159

There were a plethora of studies and data completed on the status of Black males in America; however, there continued to be evidence of disparities in academic growth of Black males throughout this nation. This study observed the interactions teachers had with Black males in the classroom and explored how student perceptions revolved around teachers’ expectations. The purpose of this study was to investigate how expectations contributed to experiences for Black males in elementary and middle school and to disseminate this information to educators. Specifically, this exploratory study analyzed the outcome of the classroom environment established by teacher expectations and how teachers’ interactions communicated those expectations to Black males. This research was conducted in four classrooms, two elementary 5th grade classrooms and two middle school 7th grade classrooms. A combination of interviews (with teachers and students) and observations were the primary source of data. Findings were gleaned from the observations and interviews. Findings included that teacher expectations contributed to the perceptions of their students; they viewed their interactions with teachers as positive. Also, there were no clear distinction between middle school teachers and elementary
school teachers and how they expressed expectations for their students; and the expression of teacher expectations are determined upon the relationship teachers have with their students.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The status of Black males in the United States is critical. There is a plethora of evidence suggesting disproportionate representation among races in the high proportion of Black males incarcerated, the low proportion of Black males enrolled in post-secondary educational programs, low graduation rates, and low numbers for Black males employed as professionals. Chapter One introduces this study and includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

According to Whiting (2009), Black males as a group experience disproportionate amounts of school failure. Compared to Black females and White males, for example, Black males have the highest dropout rates, poorest achievement, and lowest test scores. The U.S. Department of Education Compendium Report from 1972-2009 explained that information about the status of dropouts refers to “the percentage of individuals who are not enrolled in high school and who do not have a high school credential/diploma or GED certification” (p. 224). Statistics from the Compendium Report (2009) revealed that the overall dropout rate has declined from 14.6 % in 1972 to 8.1 % in 2009; however, Black males with 9.3 % of the overall dropout rate are second to the highest group. Hispanics who do not possess a high school diploma or who are not enrolled in high school comprise 17.6% of the dropout rate. The dropout rate for Black males, at 9.3%, ranks second only to Hispanics with a 17.6% dropout rate.

Some Black males do complete high school and have proceeded to post-secondary programs. In 2010-2011, Black students (male and female) represented 13% of the total population, but only 10 % earned a bachelor’s degrees compared to 69% White students
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

(male and female) who earned bachelor’s degrees (U.S. Department of Education 2013). Although, the dropout rate declined for both Blacks and Hispanics from 2010- 2011 (7.3 % and 13.6 %, respectively), the dropout rate for Blacks and Hispanics still remained higher than the rate for Whites, which was 5.0 %.

The statistics concerning Black males in incarceration are astounding when compared to other race groups, especially compared to White males. Note in Figure 1 the contrast among Black males as compared to other ethnic groups, especially the incarceration rates for Blacks compared to the other groups. In 2008, the Black population encompassed only 12 % of the entire U.S. Population. During this time, there was a

**Figure 1.**

The Disproportionalities among Statistics for Blacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hisp</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisp. Or Latino</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Information in Figure 1 was adopted from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012)

population of over 1,610,446 prisoners under federal and state correctional jurisdiction.

Out of this prison population, Blacks made up 38% overall. White prisoners made up 34%
of the U.S. prison population. In Figure 1 the disparities of Blacks (and Hispanics) are shown.

According to Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro (2013), data obtained from the Bureau of Justice released a collection of data comparing the disproportionate incarceration percentages by race. Of every 100,000 Black males in the United States there are 3,042 in prison, compared to 1,261 Hispanic males and 487 White males. These overwhelming statistics set the stage for imbalance among Black males and White males in the United States.

The disproportionalities among Blacks compared to other races do not end with desolate percentages for incarceration, but are also prevalent in uneven rates of unemployment. In 2010, the unemployment rate was 7.5% for Asians, 8.7% for non-Hispanic Whites, 12.5% for Hispanics, and 16.0% for Blacks. In terms of unemployment, Figure 1 shows that there are two-tiers: relatively low unemployment for Asians and Whites and relatively high unemployment for Hispanics and Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The statistics on imprisonment, unemployment, and drop-out rates of Black males imply an overall concept of failure.

This data illustrate the disparities in the high proportion of Black males incarcerated and unemployed, the low proportion of Black males obtaining post-secondary education degrees, and the high proportion of Black males dropping out of high school. Throughout the data presented, there is one mutual experience that all Black males have in common: school. All children are required to attend school from at least age 7 to 16. School can be the catalyst for examining potential differences and disparities for Black males. These contrasts and comparisons could be a result of multiple causes; however, this study will
investigate common experiences in which samples of Black males (between the ages 7-14) participate.

Teachers’ expectations and how teachers’ interactions communicate those expectations to Black male students adds to a safe-learning environment in classrooms. The safe-learning environment becomes a key factor in promoting academic achievement in Black males. According to Davis (2013), the achievement gap for African American males can be explained in relationship to how schools are organized, based upon the classroom environment in the categories of curriculum issues, expectations, school achievement climate, and teaching strategies.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study will ascertain the interactions teachers have with male students in 5th grade and 7th grade classrooms by exploring how student perceptions and motivation revolve around teachers’ expectations. The purpose of this study is to investigate how teacher expectations contribute to the educational and academic experiences for male students, especially Black male students.

**Research Questions**

In considering the academic performance of Black males, the following research questions guided the study focus:

1. What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers' expectations?
2. What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students?
3. In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed?
Significance of the Study

This exploratory study will convey how teachers’ expectations contribute to student learning, and why teacher interactions matter for Black males. It will explore how teachers’ expectations and interactions communicate the range of expectations in contributing to the education and academic achievement of Black males. If teachers establish high expectations for Black male students, I would hypothesize that teachers would exert a positive influence on those students. To record sustainable achievement differences, teachers must intentionally set high expectations for students, especially Black males. According to Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), “details provide further evidence that one person’s expectations of another’s behavior may come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy. When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development” (p. 20). My goal in this study is to consider the influence teachers have on Black males through the educational setting and to provide insight on how to assist educators.

Too many of these (Black) males face social barriers—from adults and peers—and they have come to believe that they are neither intelligent nor academically capable. This waste of human potential and talent must be rectified. One strategy offered herein is that educators can help put Black males on the right trajectory by focusing on their self-perceptions in academic settings. (Whiting, 2009, p. 232)

Delimitations

One delimitation is the timeline for the study. Practical consideration influences the decision that the study would last one semester. More time observing in classrooms might have revealed additional insights.
Another delimitation is the location of the study. The research will be conducted in Langston Elementary and Scott Middle Schools, which are part of the De’Nae Community School District where the researcher is employed. However, the researcher is not responsible for supervising teachers and does not have authority over personnel at either Langston Elementary School or Scott Middle School.

The third delimitation is the sample of the study. The teachers who teach English Language Arts at the elementary and middle school will be observed by the three observers and interviewed by the researcher. The fifteen students selected for the sample are students currently attending Langston Elementary and Scott Middle School. If more time had been available, then I would have been able to study more teachers, students, and/or schools.

Hispanic males were not a focus of this study, which is the fourth delimitation. Although, there are similar disparities between Blacks and Hispanics, they still have many differences. If there were more resources, such as time, then the study could have included Hispanics.

Definition of Terms

This section presents important terms used in the dissertation. The definitions provided align with the context of the study. The definitions are introduced and cited.

**Definition of expectations.** The foundation of teacher expectations is that all teachers form opinions on what students are capable of doing academically based upon characteristics that teachers value about students. If the teacher forms an opinion due to characteristics such as appearance, intelligence, home-life, or behavior, then teachers have the power to act on their opinions of each student. This can dictate how teachers respond and interact with students, according to Rist (2000).

---

1 All names or participating district, schools, students, and teachers are pseudonyms.
Definition of interactions. Teacher-to-student interactions leave a lasting impression on the individual student and the whole class in general. Teacher interactions through communication, connection, and collaboration with students in a positive manner can encourage students to accomplish tasks and be productive. Teachers who interact positively with students in the classroom are influential in getting students to accomplish goals set before them. Research according to Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Vallarreal, and Johnson (2012); Roorda, Koomen, and Split (2011); and Rashid (2009), indicate that a teacher’s response to students and interactions with students are crucial to students’ achievement. Student engagement directly relates to academic achievement, therefore, it is important to establish a good relationship with students to keep them engaged in learning.

Definition of achievement. Summarized from Davis’ research (2003), achievement is equivalent to academic success of students in a school setting. A student’s opportunity to achieve is created through engagement in the learning process, attainment of skills through the curriculum, focused instruction, and access to academic experiences. Achievement gaps come into play when the levels of student achievement are uneven for various groups of student populations. “Explanations of the achievement gap relating to how schools are organized have concentrated on curriculum issues, teaching strategies, school achievement climate, and expectations” (Davis, 2003, p. 525).

Summary

Statistics shared on the outlook of Black males in American are disturbing as the results indicate a high number of Black males incarcerated, unemployed, and dropped out of high school. Concurrently, there are a low number of Black males obtaining post-secondary education degrees. To address the Black males’ status in America, schools are common ground where all students can be given the opportunity to respond to the
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

expectations and interactions of classroom teachers. Literature will be reviewed to analyze teachers’ expectations for Black male students, why their expectations matter, and the status of Black males in the United States.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review will discuss the educational expectations teachers have for students and how those expectations play a role in student achievement through teachers establishing a classroom environment of high expectations. Additionally, this review will examine how teachers’ interactions communicate those expectations to Black males. It analyzes three bodies of knowledge: Black males in United States Schools, teachers’ expectations, and why teacher expectations matter for Black males.

Black Males in US Schools

As illustrated in Chapter One, the current plight of Black males in the United States is demoralizing to the future of Black men in this country. The proportion of Black males incarcerated when compared to their White counterparts, as well as the percentage of unemployed Blacks in this country as compared to all other races, provides disturbing results. Comparing Black males academic and professional status to Whites and the disproportionate statistics that result is an age-old dilemma. In some instances, Black males are viewed as being academically below or less intelligent than White males. A July 2001 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report explored Black and White differences in school achievement and other educational and economic outcomes. The major NCES findings revealed that Blacks throughout elementary and secondary school scored lower overall than Whites did on mathematics and reading tests.

According to Fantuzzo (2012), Davis-Kean (2005), Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (1998), and Kennedy (1992), there were significant differences or gaps in academic achievement of Black male students compared to White male students. Research indicated White males had higher academic achievement and Black males had lower academic
achievement starting as early as elementary school age. Often times, these disparities are explained away by attributing the differences to socioeconomic status, the level of parent’s education obtained, student participation in class, and/or general maintenance of low academic expectations of Black male students. Davis (2003) affirmed:

African-American boys create major problems and challenges for schools: These challenges are cultural and gender based. The difficulty for schools, in part, rests in their inability to deal with where these Black boys are coming from and their authentic experiences of being young, Black, and male in U.S. public schools. Although educational institutions acknowledge that these students often bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives, little is understood about the complex lives African-American boys lead inside and outside school (p. 530).

This research leads back to perceptions of individuals who are making judgments based upon the perceptions of others and the perceptions of self. Black males face two stigmas that shape their perceptions. First, many Black males are perceived as less privileged; therefore, they are treated like others in lower socio-economic status groups. Second, Black males are judged based on White cultural norms. Racial stereotyping which leads to lowered expectations, strips away educational opportunities in the classroom. In order for all students to be recognized for their individuality and uniqueness, teachers must dispel racial stereotypes and establish safe-to-learn classroom environments.

Research indicated that racial stereotypes do affect Black males’ self-concepts, which repeatedly have transpired out of negative experiences and the negative perception of others (Evans, Cooping, Rowley, and Kurtz-Costes, 2011; Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Okeke, 2011; Swanson, Cunningham, and Spencer, 2003; and Swinton, Kurtz-Costes, Rowley). These negative perceptions also related to Black males’ achievement in school. The
research showed that Black males had lower self-concept or self-esteem based upon their negative experiences or previous situations.

Contrary to stereotypes, according to Davis (2003), all Black boys are not the same: However, it is the views and attitude of Black males themselves that provide the most hope for the future. Therefore, it is not enough to study Black males and to create policies designed to alter their plight. It is equally important that we see them for the diverse group that they are and more importantly that we listen to what they are telling us about who they are, what they think, and what they hope to achieve (Rowley and Bowman, 2009, p.318).

**Teachers’ Expectations**

Teacher expectation is defined as opportunities, beliefs, potentials, and/or viewpoint the teacher holds for students as it relates to academic achievement. Teachers place expectations on how students may perform academically for various reasons and teachers assert those expectations at varying degrees to influence student’s academic success. Teachers create their classroom atmospheres through establishing routines, activities, and interactions with students (Davis, 2003; Good, 1987; and Rist, 2000).

In studying the literature on teachers’ expectations, I found several central concepts. These concepts include: measuring teachers’ expectations, teachers’ expectations for student achievement, teachers’ expectations impact student behaviors, and teachers’ expectations are conveyed through interactions with students. This section will further expound on each of these concepts.

According to Davis (2003), the achievement gap for Black males can be explained in relationship to how schools are organized. The organization of schools is based upon classroom environment, which is established by the level of teachers’ expectations, school

In the area of curriculum and instruction, low-expectation students in general receive fewer opportunities to learn, spend less time on instruction-related activities, and receive less curricular content (or receive content that has been “diluted”). Teachers are less apt to direct instruction to low-expectation students, are less likely to be aware of, or more likely to tolerate, non-attending behavior on the part of such students, and tend to place fewer demands on them for classroom performance, homework assignments, and overall academic effort (p.471-472).

These teaching strategies are utilized from the literature to create Table 1: Evidence of actions of Teacher Expectations.

**Measuring teachers’ expectations.** According to Jussim and Harber (2005), “The accumulation-over-time hypothesis is that a self-fulfilling prophecy process triggered by a perceiver’s expectations at one time continues so that targets conform more and more to the perceiver’s original expectations” (p. 150). In order for teachers to deliberately establish high expectations for students, teachers must consider what subtle behaviors they currently communicate to students through their actions and comments toward students. The subtle messages teachers communicate to students are usually indirect and elusive, but ultimately can be damaging when it comes to establishing high expectations for Black male students.

It is imperative that teachers consider what and how these subtle behaviors or actions they display towards students and make a conscious decision to communicate high expectations to all students, especially Black male students. Proctor (1984) reports:

Low-expectation students are asked fewer questions and given less time to respond to questions. They receive inadequate feedback, less praise for successful performance,
and more criticism for incorrect responses. Finally, low-expectation students receive from the teacher fewer positive, non-verbal communications of warmth and personal regard (p. 472). Therefore, teachers should communicate high expectations to students, which are conveyed when teachers ask more questions and allow for more wait-time for students to respond to questions.

Table 1 was created as a result of the literature review to serve as a guide during teacher observations to assist the observers in taking field notes. Table 1 outlines high and low quality of expectations based upon evidence and/or actions of teachers toward students in general. It is expected that during my exploratory research study, I will revise and add to this list of evidence and actions to more precisely define how teacher expectations are conveyed in classroom settings.

Table 1

*Teacher Expectations Chart*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Action</th>
<th>Quality of Expectation: in volume &amp; #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks open-ended questions</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows wait time for an answer response</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves on immediately to next child to answer</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifies authority and power</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist student with correct answer</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells student his answer is incorrect and moves on</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives positive verbal praise</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives NO verbal praise</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ expectations for student achievement.** Teacher expectations can influence the achievement of their students. Educators can embrace the challenges of cultural and gender differences in Black males and no longer allow excuses to stand in the
way of sufficiently educating Black males. The majority of these excuses are not controllable by Black males; yet they are expected to perform at the same rate and on the same standards as their White male counterparts. Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, and Chen (2012) commented, “Another limitation of the test-score gap research for African American boys is the lack of adequate consideration of significant protective factors that have known relations with academic performance, such as academic engagement” (p. 561). The responsibility lies with the teacher to engage students in the lessons presented and in students’ own learning. According to Klem and Connell, (2004), “Students perform better academically if they are engaged in school. Teacher support and expectations play a role in student engagement in school” (p. 262). Engaging students can be accomplished through teachers creating and maintaining a level of teacher-to-student connectedness. This can be done by each teacher displaying support and genuine concern for all students.

By displaying genuine concern and support, teachers may establish positive connections with the Black males in their classrooms. It is equally important for teachers to strive to debunk stereotypes or prejudices that they may possess. Such biases may arise from teacher’s own experiences or a lack of information about the culture and/or ethnicity of Black males.

There are disparities in the academic achievement of Black male students as compared to their White counterparts (Whiting, 2009). The achievement gaps continue to increase as Black males are treated as though they are inferior; therefore, teachers setting high academic expectations for Black males can make a difference (Davis, 2013). Teachers have the responsibility to provide equitable educational and student engagement opportunities for Black male students. Teachers need to be aware of these disparities and expect Black male students to be fully engaged in their own learning. Teachers can support
their Black male students’ engagement through classroom structure and teaching styles, according to Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007).

According to Rubie-Davis (2009), “The general claim seems to be that where teachers believe that their students can meet targets and they provide appropriate learning opportunities and support, then their students are likely to achieve the goals and improve academic achievement” (p. 695). Students can and will rise to the level of expectations teachers set for them. Teachers too, hold great responsibility in providing the opportunities and setting the goals for students to achieve.

A teacher’s approach to teaching can impact or hinder students’ academic achievement. The teaching or instructing approach must be in the best interest of the student, especially Black male students. A teacher’s teaching style and classroom structure plays a role in giving students the necessary tools and information for acquiring knowledge. Teachers create their classroom atmosphere through establishing routines, activities, and interactions with students.

A long series of studies have been conducted to determine what effects on children a teacher’s values, beliefs, and attitudes, and most crucial to this analysis, a teacher’s expectations may have…if the teacher expects high performance; she receives it, and vice versa. (Rist, 2000, p. 268)

Therefore, it is essential that the classroom environment is set up or structured where students are benefiting academically. Also, the teacher’s teaching style is critical in meeting the needs of all learners, especially Black male students. Through instruction and teaching strategies teachers transmit their knowledge to students. The knowledge teachers wish to convey may not be learned adequately by all students based on how it is communicated.
Teachers who view intelligence as dynamic and fluid rather than static and unchanging are less likely to have rigid preconceived notions about what students will or will not be able to achieve. When teachers and administrators maintain high expectations, they encourage in students a desire to aim high rather than to slide by. To expect less is to do students a disservice, not a favor (Lumsden, 1997, p. 4).

Students acquire knowledge through reading, exploring, investigating, and being instructed. When students are immersed in literature, presented information and given opportunities to garner teachings, then students accomplish or experience success in learning and achieve that which was taught. Lumsden (1997) further expressed, “Teachers’ expectations for students—whether high or low—can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, students tend to give to teachers as much or as little as teachers expect of them” (p. 1).

All students have varying degrees of cognitive abilities and the responsibility lies with the educators to tap into each child’s cognition to assess where a child is academically in order to extend or heighten their academic achievement to the next level (Klem and Connell, 2004). One would expect almost all male students of the same age to have an average academic achievement level, no matter their race or socioeconomic differences, provided each student has been given the same or similar education opportunities. The focus of equal educational opportunities for all students is a broad topic that has credence for further research. However, the characteristics of gender, racial, cultural, and ethnicity differences in students should not matter as it relates to similar or equitable educational opportunities for learning. The differences in characteristics vs. equitable educational opportunities are another prospective research project that needs to be investigated.

The way a teacher communicates, connects, relates, and collaborates with a student or multiple students is important to how the interaction builds and is portrayed. Ultimately,
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

teachers possess power over whether a child will succeed academically or not succeed academically. Teachers’ expectations can be positive or negative, supportive or unsupportive, encouraging or discouraging, and helpful or destructive. It is important for all teachers to understand how their high or low expectations impact all students academically.

Teachers extend and/or remediate instruction for students in regards to what their levels of expectations are for each student. DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2011) and Rist (2000) research suggested that teachers’ own prejudices against Black students resulted in lower expectations, which ultimately affected the academic achievement of those Black students. The lower the expectations a teacher possess for Black students becomes the base-line of where the teacher is striving to take the student or students academically. These low expectations can be birthed out of prejudices against Black students. The prejudices are undesirable because it is the responsibility of teachers to educate all students. In other words, teachers maintaining low expectations for Black students based upon race prejudices are unacceptable (DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho 2011). When teachers possess biases toward Black students for any reason, but especially due to their race, then it is defaulting on their responsibilities. These biases result in teachers establishing low expectations for Black students, which eventually decreases the academic achievement of Black students.

**Teacher expectations impacting student behaviors.** Educators possess an important responsibility of educating students in a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Creating a safe-to-learn environment for all students adds a sense of security and comfort that can be equally as important as physical safety. According to Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo, (2009), when teachers create a safe learning
environment within a positive classroom atmosphere, the level of comfortable can encourage students to take learning risks within that environment. These are opportunities for student growth academically and socially based upon teacher expectations, classroom structure, and student behaviors.

“Teacher Power” (Rist 2000) can be concerning if teachers are given the latitude to discourage learning or negatively reinforce inappropriate behaviors within the classroom. Once teachers understand the level of influence their level of expectation have on each student, then teachers can appropriately address how they communicate those expectations to each student in and outside the classroom. When teachers are positive and encouraging to students through their day-to-day interactions, then the results are a win-win situation for all.

According to Conroy, et al., (2009), when teachers create a safe learning environment, which lies within a positive classroom atmosphere where children are comfortable and encouraged, then students will take learning risks within that environment. These achievement opportunities will foster student growth academically and socially. Additionally, a safe learning environment also means establishing high expectations for students. Rosenthal and Jacobson’s study, *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968), provides “evidence that one person’s expectations of another’s behavior may come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy. When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development” (p. 20). Positive encouragement and valuable support are an expectation from classroom teachers who are responsible for creating the tone in their own classroom.

Because safe learning environments are so important, it would be interesting to know if schools understand the conducive-to-learning aspect of safety in the classroom.
environment. A conducive-to-learning environment refers to the classroom setting as a place where all students feel comfortable and have the opportunity to experience encouraging, positive, and valuable assistance to learning through high teacher expectations. In establishing and creating the classroom environment, it is the teacher’s responsibility to nurture and cultivate a conducive-to-learning environment by establishing high expectations for all students. For example, when teachers establish high expectations as part of a conducive-to-learning environment, then students are at an adequate level for learning opportunities and academic growth within the classroom. Therefore, students will rise to the occasion of improved academics (Rist, 2000).

However, some educators base academic expectations upon assumptions of what they think certain students can do or how they feel about particular students. Some educators, who set low expectations for students and do not maintain the structure of a safe-to-learning environment where students are free to explore, present a lack of confidence or lower expectations to students. Holloway (2000) providing insight on this subject, stated:

Many teachers failed to provide suitable instructional activities for a wide range of pupil attainment, especially those pupils at the extremes of attainment. Many teachers provided neither sufficient challenge for a range of pupil attainment nor flexibility to allow for slow and accelerated periods of learning (p. 82).

Often times, teachers will present and lead instruction directed to the masses or lower ability students rather than based upon high expectations and perceived abilities. Holloway (2000) suggested teachers do not know and/or understand the power of motivation and beliefs they possess when standing in front of a class or interacting with a group of
students. Teachers may not understand how their expectations for students play a
significant role in student achievement.

The atmosphere established in a classroom derives from the teacher’s expectation of
each student individually and as a class collectively. Also, teacher interactions with
students individually and/or collectively play a part in establishing an environment
conducive to learning. A teacher’s interaction with students sets the tone for the classroom
environment and also sets the example for how students will treat and interact with each
other.

Some may question, how does teacher expectation and interaction with students
compare to safe school environments? To answer the question, Rubie-Davies, Peterson,
Irving, Widdowson, and Dixon, (2010) affirmed that teachers’ expectations are directly
related to classroom behavior and student achievement. Teachers often set student
expectations to maintain classroom behavior, but students’ perceptions were that teachers
expect them to concentrate in class, put forth their best effort, listen in class, and stay in
school. Teachers walk into their classroom with some level of expectation for their
students and for the class concerning their academic achievement and behavioral
interactions.

Students respond to various levels of expectations teachers place on them within the
classroom. The value that teachers demonstrate for students impacts teacher-student
interactions. If students meet or exceed teachers’ expectations, the teacher-student
relationship is usually enhanced. Teachers place various levels of hope or confidence,
abilities, potentials, and opportunities on their students. Teachers form these various
behavioral and academic expectations for the class and students individually. These
expectations are formed based upon teachers’ perceptions of what students can do and achieve or what they think students cannot do or achieve (Rist, 2000).

**Teachers’ expectations are conveyed through interactions.** Research shows that a teacher’s response and interactions to students are crucial to the achievement of Black male students (Hughes et al., 2012; Roorda, Koomen, and Split (2011); Rashid, 2009). It is very important for teachers to establish a valuable relationship to keep Black male students engaged in learning, and the engagement directly relates to Black student academic achievement.

Teacher-to-student interactions are impressionable to the individual student and the whole class. The way a teacher interacts with students in the classroom provides a model for how students end up treating each other. Their actions are often mimicked by students in the classroom, so when teachers maintain positive interactions and high expectations for Black male students, then the teacher models positive and appropriate interactions for all students (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Teacher interactions through communication, connection, and collaboration with students in a positive manner can encourage students to accomplish tasks, be productive, and establish high expectations. Teachers possessing positive interactions and high expectations with students in the classroom are influential in getting students to accomplish goals set before them.

Teachers create and establish their classroom environment, which is communicated to all students through their interactions and expectations. Marzano (2010) stated, “What actually communicates expectations to students is teacher behavior” (p.82).

The interactions between individuals can nurture or destroy a relationship. Interactions between individuals are either viewed as positive or negative. The interaction through connections, communication, contact, and collaboration among individuals can
determine the tone and quality of any relationship. Interactions, in the positive manner, can motivate individuals in accomplishing tasks and being productive. Positive interactions teachers possess with students in the classroom are powerful in establishing high expectations and getting students to accomplish goals set before them.

**Implicit bias may impact teacher expectations.** The stereotypes and attitudes of an individual unconsciously affect or impact their actions, understanding, and decisions. These stereotypes and attitudes are called *implicit bias*. Implicit biases can play a major role in the classroom. A teacher’s implicit bias can cause her to change her interactions and expectations with students. According to Staats (2016), “In education, the real-life implications of implicit biases can create invisible barriers to opportunity and achievement for some students – a stark contrast to the values and intentions of educators and administrators who dedicate their professional lives to their students’ success” (p. 38). To dispel implicit biases, these unconscious actions and beliefs must be brought to the forefront of educators and addressed. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) suggested “tools to assist educators in increasing equity in our nation’s schools” (p.607). The goal of the tools is implanting strategies to eliminate implicit bias by offering educators other ways to think about equity. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) referred to these tools as equity traps. The four equity traps suggest the following actions: To reframe teachers’ thinking, gather oral histories from their community to learn more about their community, participate in a book study on race differences, conduct an equity audit, hire new teachers who are committed to all students, create a collaborative school, utilize mentor teachers, and allow a master teacher the opportunity to model for a colleague.
Teacher Expectations Matter to Black Males

Teachers possess the power to move forward in educating Black males through establishing high levels of teacher expectations for all Black males and expecting students to achieve those high levels established. Marzano (2010), shared one way to launch high expectations for all:

It is fairly easy to establish a positive affective tone with all students. Teachers simply make sure that they exhibit the same positive behaviors to all students – smiling, involving students in good-natured discussions, and engaging in appropriate physical contact. All students will typically respond well to this type of behavior (p. 83).

Black males for their individuality and by doing so, address each academic need on an individual basis, through differentiated instruction.

To ensure academic success for African American boys, curriculum improvement, instruction, and support for teachers should begin in pre-school and earlier before boys begin to underachieve. It is clear that program interventions are less effective if they are implemented after boys have fallen too far behind (Davis, 2013, p. 526).

While the achievement gap between Black males and White males continue to increase, the research on underachieving Black males is another crucial reason why educators must address the achievement gap disparities now and not wait until Black males fall in the underachieving category. Not only do teacher expectations establish achievement goals, but socially the teacher can assist Black males in understanding the value of an education. Davis (2013) believed that struggling students’ learning opportunities isn’t sufficient. Teachers also should actively strive to understand Black boys and intervene by structuring social lessons that build an appreciation for school and academic achievement.
A teacher has the freedom to determine the level of academic expectation as either high or low per student. Teachers usually make these determinations of expectations based upon a student’s race and/or gender. American society continues to struggle with racism and Blacks are still considered subordinate. This is reflected in classrooms across this country as teachers’ expectations for Black males are often low. This creates the need for teachers to intentionally establish high expectations for Black males. “African American males face difficult obstacles to overcome in order to become academically successful. Educators must become more conscious of the role that race and racism plays in their schooling environments” (Howard, 2008, p. 954). Students spend the maximum amount of their school day in classroom environments under the supervision and care of teachers. Therefore, Davis (2013) believed that teachers should never take for granted how much influence they have on Black males due to the quantity of time spent in classrooms. Teachers’ expectations and interactions play a major role in Black males achieving academically and contributing to the school environment.

Teacher expectations of Black males continue to interfere with their academic achievement. These interferences come into play through teacher interactions and student perception of teacher interactions. Also, students tend to take on the self-fulfilling prophecy they perceive teachers have of them. The racism in American society causes Black males to feel inferior, which perpetuates the self-fulfilling prophecy of low potential.

**Conclusion**

Teachers are a key factor in creating a safe-to-learn environment for all students, especially Black males. The concept of a safe-to-learn environment expands beyond physical safety. All students, especially Black males, will benefit from feeling comfortable and free to take learning risks. It is a teacher’s most important responsibility in educating
students effectively by creating and establishing a safe and nurturing environment where teacher expectations and interactions are positive and encouraging for all students.

Through high levels of expectations and positive teacher-to-students interactions, teachers possess the power to “level the playing field” in Black student academic achievement. When teachers become aware of the power to “level the playing field” and utilize it within the classroom, then teachers will increase the number of Black male students succeeding academically.

The level of expectation teachers hold for students is the level in which students will strive to achieve. If teachers are maintaining low academic expectations for Black males, then the majority of the time students will work up to the level of expectation placed before them. This is also true if teachers are maintaining high levels of expectations for Black males. No matter how challenging, students will strive to obtain the high levels expected of them. Teacher expectations can have a positive or negative effect on how well their Black male students perform academically.

A teacher’s interactions with students contribute to the academic achievement of Black male students. This is accomplished when teachers have positive and encouraging interactions with all students, especially Black male students. Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, and Chen (2012) stated, “Engagement behaviors, on the other hand, serve to promote continued participation in educational activities and the pursuit of achievement outcomes. Behaviors in the classroom that include attention control, persistence, flexibility, and problem solving have strong relationships with academic achievement as they support student’s engagement in classroom learning situations and facilitate their success toward achievement outcomes” (p. 561).
Based on this literature review, there is research evidence that supports the notion that teacher expectations have a strong influence on how well Black males perform academically in school. My research methodology in Chapter Three will describe how I intend to address these issues of teachers’ expectations in actual classrooms.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

In this chapter, a qualitative method of research has been described. First, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the research questions. Second, the research design communicated the rationale for the qualitative study. Next, the subjects were described with background information. I shared the criteria used to select the individuals in the study. Then followed a description of the instruments used to collect the data for observations and interviews. The next section explained how the data was analyzed. Finally, I included the limitations within the study and the chapter summary.

Purpose of the Study

This study ascertained the interactions teachers had with male students in 5th grade and 7th grade classrooms by exploring how student perceptions and motivation revolve around teachers’ expectations. The purpose of this study was to investigate how teacher expectations contributed to the educational and academic experiences for male students, especially Black male students.

Research Questions

In considering the academic performance of Black males, the following research questions guided the study focus:

1. What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers’ expectations?
2. What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students?
3. In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed?
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

Research Design

This exploratory research study was conducted in two schools, including elementary fifth graders and middle school seventh graders. A combination of interviews (both teacher and students) and observations were the primary sources of data. Eight teacher interviews were conducted with four occurring in February 2015 and four at the end of the Spring 2015 semester. Fifteen students (8 Black and 7 White) were interviewed at the end of the spring 2015 semester. White male students were interviewed to provide baseline data. Also by including White students, the researcher minimized observer effects. If teachers had not realized the primary focus was on Black males, they were more likely to act naturally. Prior to the classroom observations, the four classroom teachers (two 5th grade teachers from Langston Elementary School and two 7th grade English/Language Arts teachers from Scott Middle School) were interviewed about the whole class at the beginning of the semester. Then a second interview was conducted after the first round of observations near the end of the 2015 spring semester.

Upon the recommendation of my dissertation committee, I had reviewed Ned Flanders’ Interaction Analysis, Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher order thinking, and Carl Glickman’s Verbal Flow. Flanders’ Interaction Analysis consisted of the following categories: accepts feelings, praise or encourages, accepts or use pupil ideas, asks questions, lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority. These tools had been adapted and integrated into the observation tool that was used in this study. See Appendix 4.

The classroom observations included three observers. Joining me were Gabe Haworth, a graduate assistant in the Department of Educational Leadership at Ball State University. Gabe has earned his Bachelor’s degree from Ball State in Sport Administration.
and was pursuing his Master’s degree in Educational Administration and Supervision.

Gabe has coached track and field and cross country for six years. He served as the Head Boys’ Cross Country Coach and the Assistant Track and Field Coach at Muncie Central High School. Gabe’s previous elementary school experience was serving as a Title I aide at Summitville Elementary School in Summitville, Indiana.

The third observer was Dr. Marilynn Quick, Doctoral Advisor and Assistant Professor at Ball State University in the Department of Educational Leadership. Dr. Quick had a plethora of experiences in elementary and middle school classrooms. She has served as a former reading specialist, school principal, central office administrator, and school superintendent. Dr. Quick has been recognized for her accomplishments as an educator by receiving the 1997 Edgar L. Morphet Dissertation Award from the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration on teacher evaluation. On April 23, 2013, Dr. Quick was awarded the Outstanding Teaching Award for Ball State University Teachers College. She has been a licensed trainer for the Dr. Carolyn Downey “Three-Minute Classroom Walk-Throughs.” Dr. Quick has been involved with numerous consulting activities observing in hundreds of classrooms across Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Texas.

By adding more objective outside observers, biases were reduced in this study. The involvement of three observers has enhanced observational reliability as observational notes were compared and criteria were clarified. The researchers had observed teacher-communicated expectations to students and teacher-to-student interactions. In addition, the observers noted students’ reactions to how teachers’ comments suggest high or low expectations. (Table 1: Teacher Expectations were used during the observations to determine high and low expectations). Teachers’ comments were recorded and then coded as positive or negative. During classroom observations, the three observers relied on
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

seating charts for classroom observation, observation rubrics, and scripting to record the
data and debriefed with each other. The use of three observers ensured the inter-rater
reliability of the research.

Table 1

*Teacher Expectations Chart*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Action</th>
<th>Quality of Expectation: in volume &amp; #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks open-ended questions</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows wait time for an answer response</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves on immediately to next child to answer</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifies authority and power</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist student with correct answer</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells student his answer is incorrect and moves on</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives positive verbal praise</td>
<td>high 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives NO verbal praise</td>
<td>low 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After synthesizing what researchers discovered about teacher expectations and
interactions, I found teacher expectations to be defined as opinions teachers form about
students based upon characteristics or individualities such as appearance, intelligence,
home-life, or behavior. Teachers had the choice to act upon their opinions of each student,
which ultimately dictated how teachers responded and interacted with students.

Table 1 included all of the categories of Flanders’ Interaction Analysis. All the
observable teacher actions from Bloom’s Taxonomy were also integrated on the
observation protocol on both the seating chart and the observation table (Table 1). The
templates that were used for classroom observations could be found in the appendices
(Appendices 2-6). These templates included a seating chart for classroom observations to
capture the verbal flow within the classroom. Glickman’s Verbal Flow, for example,
allowed the observers to chart or show who the teacher called on, the type of question that student was asked, and student response. Second is a form for scripting that captured specific teacher comments or phrases that encouraged or motivated students.

The third chart was Bloom’s and Young’s Observation-Tally-Sheet. This sheet allowed the observers to track the depth of knowledge of the questions and teacher verbal interactions with students. This tally sheet was used with Table 1 to mark the level of teacher interaction as high or low. There were additional blank scripting sheets for free-hand scripting by the observers. These sheets were utilized to write or track teachers’ comments to the whole class.

**Description of Sample**

Pseudonyms were utilized throughout this study. The following research work was conducted in Happy Town where there were nine elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Parent consent forms were collected before students could participate in this study. Teacher participants had signed a consent form before they were included.

The data gathered for the study came from one elementary school and a middle school in Happy Town within De’Nae Community School District. There were two 5th grade classrooms housed in Langston Elementary Schools. Data gathered from Scott Middle School were a combination of 7th graders from various English/Language Arts classes. Both schools were urban schools serving high poverty student populations. Note in Table 2 that Langston Elementary School had 50% Black student population, which was a more diverse population than Scott Middle School with 17.5% Black students. The difference in racial population from elementary to the middle school was due to the fact that four elementary schools feed into Scott Middle School. In addition, Langston
Elementary had the highest percent of Black students in the district and the other three elementary schools had a lower percentage of Black students. Langston Elementary and Scott Middle School were considered Title I supported schools due to the high number of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch, which was greater than 84% in both schools (See Table 2). Langston Elementary School did not have any self-contained special education classrooms, but serviced special needs students through a part-time resource teacher and a part-time speech pathologist. However, the elementary school was a full-service school, meaning it was staffed with a data coach, full-time nurse, school counselor, student assistant coordinator, and principal.

The middle school was a full service school with a data coach, full-time nurse, school counselor, two assistant principals, and a principal. Scott Middle School provided special education services to students with Emotional Disabilities, Mild Disabilities, and Moderate Disabilities. Each school had a majority of White teachers who were mostly female. Langston had 27 general education teachers of which four were Black females and two are Black males. The single administrator in the elementary school was a Black female. Scott Middle School had 61 general education teachers of which two were Black males/females.
Table 2

Langston Elementary School and Scott Middle School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013-2014 School Year</th>
<th>Langston Elementary School</th>
<th>Scott Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades:</td>
<td>K - 5</td>
<td>6 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population:</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Students:</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Students:</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Students:</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Students:</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian Students:</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch:</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Lunch:</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Multi means Multiracial. (Table 2 data was adopted from IDOE)

The Spring 2014 ISTEP+ data from De’Nae Community Schools for Langston Elementary Schools’ 4th and 5th graders and Scott Middle School’s 7th and 8th graders were listed for English/Language Arts and Math in Table 3. Langston Elementary School’s fourth grade students (87%) and fifth grade students (72%) increased in the percentage of students who passed ISTEP+ in English Language Arts over the previous school year as noted in Table 3. 2013-2014 fourth graders had increased in both English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math achievement scores with gains of 18% or better from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 in ELA and Math. Current fifth graders had increased on ELA scores by 15% more passed in 2014 than in 2013. However, fifth graders’ math scores had dropped by 7.8% less students passed in 2014 than in 2013. However, these scores represented different children so only broad trends could be noted without following cohorts of the same children from year to year.

As noted in Table 3, seventh graders from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 had increased by 11% in ELA with 42.5% passed in 2012-2013 and 54.1% passed in 2013-2014. The percent of seventh graders passed in math had stayed consistent for the two testing years,
maintaining 59.6% passed. There was a slight decrease in eighth grade math scores from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 by about 2.6%, as well as, the ELA scores dropped by from 51.6% passed in 2012-2013 to 45.3% passed in 2013-2014.

Table 3

*De’Nae Community Schools: Spring 2014 ISTEP and 2013 ISTEP results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th># Students tested</th>
<th>ELA % passing</th>
<th># Students tested</th>
<th>Math % passing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 denoted the number of Black students and White students who took ISTEP+ and the percent of students passed English/Language Arts for fourth through eighth grade. Happy Town’s Black males in fourth and fifth grade scored considerably lower in math and in English/Language Arts than did their White counterparts. Also, the Black males in seventh and eighth grade scored lower in English/Language Arts and in math as compared to White students.

Table 4

*Langston and Scott: Black/White Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Black Students</th>
<th>ELA % passing</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>ELA % passing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langston Elementary</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Middle School</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eight Black male and eight White male students were selected based upon the range of high or low academic achievement as identified in Table 5. However, the observers and researcher do not know nor had access to any of the students’ achievement levels. Students were selected by a combination of teacher suggested, researcher interest, and parent/student willingness to participate in this research. The students’ score were not requested by the researcher. Actually there would be no discussion about student test scores.

The previous year’s ISTEP+ scores were considered in determining high and low academic achievement. Students who scored in the pass or pass+ category on ISTEP+ would be placed in the high achievement group and students who had not passed ISTEP+ would be in the low achievement group. Eight students would be 5th graders from Langston Elementary School and eight students would be 8th graders from Scott Middle School. Half of the students at each grade level would represent the low achievement group and the other half would represent the high achievement group. Then the eight student interviews were conducted after the four classroom observations, which focused on the eight students.

Table 5

*Numerical Identifications for High and Low on ELA ISTEP+ scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>ISTEP+ Cut Score for passing</th>
<th>ISTEP+ Cut Score for pass+</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>468 - 547</td>
<td>548 - 820</td>
<td>738 +</td>
<td>Below 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>508 - 626</td>
<td>627 - 890</td>
<td>801 +</td>
<td>Below 408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cut Scores from IDOE Additional Resources: [ISTEP+ Cut Scores & Minimum and Maximum Scores](#)

There were a total of eight teacher interviews conducted with four different teachers. The 5th grade teachers and the 7th grade teachers were interviewed on two separate occasions. All four teachers were interviewed in the very beginning of the study,
before the first classroom observation. These first interviews were questions pertaining to the whole class each teacher teaches. Then the second teacher interviews utilized more probing questions that are student specific, focused on the eight individual students from the study sample (For the full interview protocols, please see Appendix 1, 7, and 8).

**Instruments.** The teacher and student interview questions were instruments created and utilized in collecting data along with classroom observations. Data gathered from the observations and interviews were explained.

**Observations.** The instruments used to gather the data in this study were the observational tools (Appendix 2-6) and interview questions (Appendix 1, 7, and 8). The observation tools were the foundation for establishing a pulse or climate of the learning environment in the elementary and middle school classrooms. The observational tools were recorded and measured the amount of teacher – student-interaction and the levels (high or low) of teacher expectations of students. The observational tools served as guides for the observers to compare notes and clarify criteria. As discussed earlier, the observation tools included seating charts for classroom observation, scripting sheets, and Bloom’s and Young’s observation rubric.

A baseline for the observations developed and studied by the three observers. An example of gathering baseline data (during whole class observations) included a standard such as teacher X called on Black male student ___ number of times and called on White male student ___ number of times. Also, teacher-student interactions charted based on the amount of verbal or non-verbal communication, positive or negative feedback, long or short wait time, and higher-order (open-ended) or basic (closed-ended) questions from teacher to Black male students and White male students.
Table 9 (See Appendix 4) was created by the researcher based upon Chapter 3 of Flanders’ Interaction Analysis and Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher order thinking. The Flanders’ analysis had been reviewed in conjunction with the research to create this observation sheet (Table 4.1) as a scripting tool to mark the level of teacher questions and/or verbal interactions with students as high, medium, low, or non-applicable (H = High (score of 4), M = Medium (score of 2.5), L = Low (score of 1), and N = Not Applicable).

**Interviews.** Interviews were conducted with elementary and middle school aged students and teachers from Scott Middle School and Langston Elementary School during the 2014-2015 school year. Students and teachers from grades 5th and 7th interviewed during a time that does not interrupt the regular school day. Semi-scripted interview protocols were established prior to any interviews. (See Appendix 1, 7, and 8) The interview data gathered was stored in my personal file cabinet for a year. All data coded with pseudonyms and would be destroyed after a year.

Observation and interview protocols were field tested prior to any observations or interviews to ensure the reliability throughout each grade level sample. Field testing was done during the team’s observation training. The three observers reviewed the observation tools and were able to practice using the tools as a part of the observation training. The observers watched and charted what was observed on pre-recorded teaching clips. Also, the protocols were reviewed by an expert panel to ensure validity. The data gathered from observations and interviews were analyzed and reported as holistic results deriving from the themes that emerge from the teachers’ perceptions, students’ perceptions, and observers’ perceptions.

**ISTEP+.** According to the Indiana Department of Education website, “The purpose of the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+) program
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

was to measure student achievement in the subject areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science (Grades 4 and 6), and Social Studies (Grades 5 and 7). In particular, *ISTEP*+ reports student achievement levels according to the Indiana Academic Standards that were adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. An Applied Skills Assessment and a Multiple-Choice Assessment, which were required components of the *ISTEP*+ program, were used to measure these standards.

The Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress Plus (*ISTEP*+) served as the primary indicator of student performance and determined student academic growth in grades three through eight.

**Data Collection.** Data gathered from the observations and interviews were analyzed.

**Observations and Interviews.** These observations included recording teachers’ classroom-wide interactions with students, teachers’ comments, teachers’ verbally communicated expectations, teachers’ non-verbal communication, and teachers’ responses to students’ questions, answers, and/or comments. The 5th grade observations were conducted in the classroom during the 90 minute reading block. The 7th grade students were observed during their 7th grade English/Language Arts class. The observers recorded the teachers’ interactions with students, teachers’ comments to students, expectations communicated, and non-verbal communication. In other words, the focus of the first round of observations was on the teacher and the whole classroom to add baseline data.

The second round of observations was to focus specifically on the sixteen identified students while in the English/Language Art classes. Students’ behaviors, comments, engagement, and interactions were recorded by the observers. Data was gathered on all sixteen students during class time, focusing on student engagement, student interactions with teacher and peers, student engagement into the lesson, and student comments.
There were three to five observations per each of the teachers who were observed, meaning there were three to five student observations for each fifth and seventh grade classroom. Specifically, the first whole class observation served as a baseline for data collection. If a second whole class observation was needed for the baseline, then it would have been conducted. There were approximately three classroom observations focused on two Black males in each of the four classrooms. These classroom observations were distributed over the course of the second semester of the 2014-2015 school at the elementary school and at the middle school, as shown in Table 6. During the 90 minute and/or class period observations, the researcher recorded ethnographic field-notes (Emerson, 1995) of what was observed and included jottings and elaborated narratives.

Observations of 5th and 7th grade classrooms in English/Language Arts conducted and recorded teacher interactions with students and teacher expectations of student academic abilities at Scott Middle School and Langston Elementary School. The protocols for classroom observations were established. The researcher did not interact with students during the observation times. (See Table 6)

Table 6

*Teacher and Student Observations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Observation Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 - 5th Gr. Teacher</td>
<td>5th Gr. ELA class</td>
<td>90 min. Block in April 2015</td>
<td>Observe teacher- whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 7th Gr. Teacher</td>
<td>7th Gr. ELA class</td>
<td>ELA Period in April 2015</td>
<td>Observe teacher- whole class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 5th Gr. Students</td>
<td>5th Gr. ELA class</td>
<td>90 min. Block in May 2015</td>
<td>Observe 8 identified students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 - 7th Gr. Students</td>
<td>7th Gr. ELA class</td>
<td>ELA Period in May 2015</td>
<td>Observe 8 identified students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three observers went through observation training on how to utilize the observation tools: seating charts for classroom observation, observation rubric for scripting, and Bloom’s and Young’s observation rubric. Together, the observers viewed teaching tapes and field tested the above observation instruments. The seating chart was recorded verbal and non-verbal flow of conversation. The observers identified students by race and gender on the seating chart as well as, tracking the kinds of questions teachers ask students and track student responses as positive or negative. Also, the observation rubric for scripting allowed the observers to write down words and/or phrases teachers say to students. This rubric tracked teachers’ positive and negative comments made to students.

Next, the Bloom’s and Young’s scripting levels provided opportunity for the observers to tally the number of times each teacher utilized these levels of questioning with students. Finally, the blank scripting sheets were used for individual focused-student scripting or for the observers to capture what the teacher says to students.

The training for the observers consisted of field testing the observation tools and revised them as needed. The observers were given several opportunities to practice scripting and to triangulate the data collected to ensure inter-rater reliability. Then the observers agreed upon what they have observed. The training schedule is in Table 7 below.
Table 7

*Training Schedule for Conducting Observations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Ball State - TC 9th floor</td>
<td>5:00 – 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 28, 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Ball State - TC 9th floor</td>
<td>5:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 2, 2015</td>
<td>Individual practice</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Week of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 2, 2015</td>
<td>Individual practice</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>February 9, 2015</td>
<td>Ball State - TC 9th floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td>4:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 16, 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research analyzed the types of responses from Black male students as they interact with their teachers. Following each observation, the researcher wrote more elaborated narratives based upon the jottings or each observation. It was the responsibility of the researcher to reduce biases she may have had and just record what was observed and recorded on paper. Any interview quotes recorded by the researcher were quoted exactly word-for-word as stated by the teacher and/or students. The class period or 90 minute observation in 5th and 7th grade classrooms served as a basis for the researcher in organizing and preparing for the interviews of each classroom teacher and one interview with each of the 16 students (Weiss, 1994).

The interviews took place during the fourth nine weeks at Scott Middle School and late in the fourth grading period at Langston Elementary School. The researcher scheduled the first round of teacher interviews in early April 2015 and the 16 student interviews for late second semester, i.e. early June 2015 at the middle school and the elementary school. (See Table 8)
In the first round of teacher interviews, questions pertained to all students in that classroom and were conducted prior to the first observation. Then there was one classroom observation for each teacher, which focused on what teachers say to students and how the teacher interacts with all students in the class. Next, the second round of observations focused on the 16 students. Each student was observed at least once, but this increased up to three observations based on data saturation. The student interviews followed the observations. These last teacher interviews (with the two fifth and two seventh grade teachers) utilized more probing questions focused on the 16 identified students.

The second round of teacher interviews was expected to be May/June 2015 and was conducted after all observations at both schools were complete. Student and teacher interviews were conducted after the regular school day to ensure that students do not miss instructional time. Parents were asked if their child can be picked up after school. The researcher conducted Ethnographic in-depth Interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Each teacher was asked the same set of questions for round one about the whole class and a different set of interview questions about identified, participating students for round two. All 16 students were asked the same interview questions. (See Appendix 8)
Data Analysis

Data was gathered in an effort to understand teacher expectations of Black male students as outlined in this dissertation. The use of observations and interviews was the means for gathering data. The researcher relied on ethnographic notes and jottings of each of the four observations to begin the analysis. Interviews were transcribed exactly as participants provided their insight. The data gathered from teachers and male students were utilized in conjunction with Black male students’ interviews to establish an overall baseline of student perceptions.

Open coding and axial coding were utilized by the researcher, who identified common themes to create a coding matrix from the transcribed teacher and student interviews and field-notes. According to Corbin (2008, p. 160), “open coding required a brainstorming approach to analysis because, in the beginning, analysts wanted to open up data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them…..Conceptualizing data not only reduced the amount of data the researcher had to work with, but at the same time provided a language for talking about the data” (Corbin, 2008, p. 160). Open coding allowed for clarity of ideas within the data gathered. Axial coding linked ideas or concepts together. The use of common themes was identified in order to gain a better understanding of the mutual threads in the study. I consulted with my academic advisors for advice on the coding scheme and coded each transcribed interview. Codes were combined together to generated or make the themes, such as teacher attitudes and teacher perception. Upon completion of this data gathering, the researcher created the analytic matrix where some quotes from the transcribed interviews were labeled under each code in support of analytical memos. The analytic matrix contained key words or common themes among the interviewees and actual quotes from various interviewees were listed in the matrix to serve
as exemplars. Finally, I attempted to analyze the data based on grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2007).

**Limitations of the Study**

The following were limitations to this study:

1. The researcher was a principal in the school district where the study was conducted. However, the limitations and biases were reduced due to the fact that the teachers who were observed and interviewed were not under the supervision of the researcher. The researcher did not have direct power or authority over the teachers in the study and the researcher was not responsible for evaluating the four teachers in the study.

2. The potential lack of parent permission slips for the students involved in the study reduced the sample size. To counteract this limitation, the researcher identified more than eight Black males for the study in case alternates were needed.

3. A limitation was the selected aspect of the problem of the study. The problem was identified as disparities in academic achievement for Black male students compared to White male students. Teachers’ individualization played a major role in their personal interactions with students and their expectations of students collectively and individually. This was a limitation because teachers are human and did not treat all Black males the same.

4. It was difficult to schedule observations in the spring semester due to ISTEP+. It was also difficult to arrange spring scheduling for after school interviews with teachers and students due to athletics and/or extra-curricular activities for teachers and students. The researcher generated an observation and interview
calendar early in the spring semester to accommodate everyone’s schedule (teachers, Black and White male students, graduate student observer, Dr. Marilynn Quick, and researcher observer).

5. Another limitation was the selected criteria of the study. The criterion in determining high academic achievement and low academic achievement for this study was based on ISTEP+ data in the area of English Language Arts. These standardized tests were required and administered in a regiment fashion as instructed by the State of Indiana. Although the state gave guidelines for testing procedures, there was still room for human error or differences in administering the test. This limitation resulted in ISTEP+ scores not being used as a component of this research. Therefore, there were no analyses made to compare high achieving or low achieving students.

6. The two 8th grade teachers who had agreed to participate in the research ended up not being able to, one was going to be out of school multiple days due to medical issues and the second teacher was out several days, and then resigned from the school corporation. Therefore, I had to do 7th grade ELA classes from Scott Middle School due to long term substitutes in the 8th grade ELA classes for the remainder of this school year.

7. I worked with my professor, Dr. Quick, in gathering my research because she served on my research observation team. As the data was gathered, the observation team debriefed and Dr. Quick often asked what my thoughts were. My respect for Dr. Quick and the concern that my answers were substandard lead to me feeling a little intimidated in answering her question.
8. We did not have Student D-5’s name for the first whole class observation. The teacher and principal provided the names of the identified students once the permission slips to participate in the study was returned by the students and families. Following the whole class observation, we obtained the name of Student D-5. We spent extra time in Teacher A’s class to observe Student D-5 for about 30 additional minutes.

9. We spent four to six times in the classrooms due to spring ISTEP+ testing, even though this was a limitation, the patterns were consistent.

10. Although Teacher A’s class is a 4th and 5th grade split class, all students involved in the study were 5th graders.

11. Teacher B’s class had a limited number of White students, especially White male students. Therefore, three Black male students and one White male student were observed. This also affected the number of White male students that had permission to be observed.

12. The limitation with observers – it was better to sit in the front of the classroom to be able to see all students, especially the targeted students. The observers improved over time because they were able to capture more data by fine tuning the data collection process of observing, and it was easier to focus on four students per classroom than the 20+ students in the whole class.

13. Identified students knew they were being observed since parent signature was needed for their participation. While observing, several students made eye contact with the observers, but their actions seemed to remain the same from when the whole class was observed.
14. There may have been inaccuracies in determining a student’s level of engagement. Students may have appeared to be engaged, but could have been daydreaming while posing with engaged behaviors, such as eye contact with the teacher, raising their hands, and/or manipulating school supplies, etc. However, three observer reached consensus on the level of engagement for each student and the initial percentages from each observer were similar.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teacher expectations and interactions contributed to experiences for Black males in school. This study discovered and observed the interactions teachers had with Black males in the classroom by exploring how student perceptions revolved around teachers’ expectations. A combination of teacher and student interviews and observations were the primary data sources. This research study was conducted in two classrooms during English Language Arts in an elementary 5th grade class and a middle school 7th grade class. There were three observers, a graduate student from the educational leadership department, Dr. Marilynn Quick, and the researcher conducted all classroom observations together. Biases were reduced by the addition of an objective outside reviewer. Observational reliability in this study was enhanced by three observers as we compared observational notes and clarified criteria together following each observation.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

According to many researchers (such as, Dimitri and Mieke, 2011; Rowley, 2011; and Rubie-Davis, 2009), teacher expectations influence student achievement. If teachers believe or perceive students can master particular skills or obtain certain goals, then research shows that students rise to the level of teacher expectations. My research examines this important topic further by studying how teacher interactions and expectations impact students, especially Black male students.

In this chapter, the results will be described. First, I will review the purpose of the study and the research questions. Second, the research design will be summarized and the rationale clarified. Then the two phases of my study, observations and interviews, will be described and explained in detail. Next, the major themes that have emerged from the study will be elucidated. Then the results gathered from the student observation data will be analyzed, and explained. Data collected from teacher and student interviews will be examined and will be expounded upon in this chapter. Then the triangulation of data collected in interviews and observations will be corroborated through the perspectives of independent observers, teachers, and students.

Purpose of the Study

This study will ascertain the interactions teachers have with male students in 5th grade and 7th grade classrooms by exploring how student perceptions and motivation revolve around teachers’ expectations. The purpose of this study is to investigate how teacher expectations contribute to the educational and academic experiences for male students, especially Black male students.
Research Questions

In considering the academic performance of Black males, the following research questions guided the study focus:

1. What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers' expectations?
2. What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students?
3. In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed?

Research Design

As outlined in Chapter Three, this exploratory research study consisted of multiple classroom observations and a combination of teacher and student interviews in two schools. Classroom observations took place in two elementary fifth grade classrooms and two middle school seventh grade classrooms. A combination of all interviews (both teacher and students) and observations are the primary sources of data. The data gathered in classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student interviews were recorded, compiled, coded, and analyzed. Each classroom observation was rated by each of the three observers. Observation field notes were taken after each observation, with the recording of the observers’ debriefing meeting in Appendix 4. Teacher and student interview data were collected with a tape recorder and then transcribed, read, and coded.

Qualitative Analysis by Concepts from Observations

Appendices 2, 3, and 4 were utilized during each teacher observation by all three observers. Appendix 3 provides a sample of an observation rubric for scripting. These observation tools captured what was observed in relationship to teacher interaction with select students in the class during classroom observations. During the observation
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

debriefing after each group observation and student observation, each observer independently scored teacher interactions based upon the observation rubric and recorded their responses in the grid shown in Appendix 4. This grid was created by the researcher to capture observation data. Each observer marked the observation tool during the observation and discussed each category with the other observers, checking for consensus. These data indicated the kinds of questions teachers ask, the level of student engagement solicited by teachers, and the level of teacher-student interactions. This rubric, which represents a combination of Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) and Young’s observation rubric (developed by researcher in 2015), was used for debriefing after each observation. The debriefing conversations were focused around the scripting level observation tool as a way to reach consensus on what was observed for teacher interaction with the whole class.

The initial field testing led the observers to adapt the best instrument to use all the observation tools with suggested minor modifications. The three observers repeated the field testing steps five times until the additional practice assured that each felt comfortable with the process and the results were consistent among raters. Their field testing rounds of observations were completed prior to actual classroom observations, which led the observers to agree on what to track and how to note the observations.

The other observation tools are included in Appendices 5 and 6, which contain copies of the resources created by the researcher to record data from class and student observations. Appendix 5 presents the training schedule for conducting observations. Blank scripting sheets for observers can be found in Appendix 6.

Another observation tool used in collecting observation data was the student seating chart (Appendix 2), which the observers used to track the number of positive and negative interactions the classroom teacher had with each identified male student. The data gathered
from the observations of the four students per 5\textsuperscript{th} grade and 7\textsuperscript{th} grade classrooms are recorded in Table 9.

Table 9 lists students by code with the observers’ accumulated percentage and means of teacher interaction/student engagement during each classroom observation. Each observer first recorded the percentage of the students’ engagement. Tallies were then totaled from how much of the engagement represented positive or negative interactions. After each observation, the observation team debriefed to compare data gathered on teacher interactions, and then the team came to a consensus on the percentage that each identified student was engaged in class. The percentages ranged from 0\% (meaning no engagement) to 100\% (fully engaged in class activities and discussion with the teacher). These observation data results were triangulated with teacher interviews and student interviews to further answer the research questions concerning teacher-student interactions in the classrooms.
Table 9

5th Grade and 7th Grade Student Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th Graders</th>
<th>5/13/15</th>
<th>5/15/15</th>
<th>5/20/15</th>
<th>5/21/15</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D 7</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 8</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 1</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 5</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 9</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 10</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 4</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7th Graders</th>
<th>5/21/15</th>
<th>5/27/15 #1</th>
<th>5/27/15 #2</th>
<th>5/29/15 #1</th>
<th>5/29/15 #2</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D 16</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 13</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>83.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 22</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 20</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 11 *</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Left class</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>50.00%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 17</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 14</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 15</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * The student left class one day and was in In-School Suspension (ISS) the other two days. NA means no observation in that particular class on that day.

Qualitative Analysis: Open Coding of Interview Questions

There were two rounds of teacher interviews, one before the classroom observations were conducted and one after all observations at both schools were completed. Student and teacher interviews were held at each school after the regular school day to ensure that students did not miss instructional time. I conducted ethnographic in-depth interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 2011), taking notes and audio recording. Each teacher was asked the same set of questions for round one about the whole class and a different set of interview questions about identified, participating students for round two. Round two interview questions were specific to the identified male students. All 15 students were asked the same interview questions during each of their individual interviews. See
Appendix 1 for round one teacher interviews, Appendix 7 for round two teacher interviews and Appendix 8 for student interviews.

My first phase of the open coding process was to review the interview transcripts and identify commonalities from the teacher interviews and student interviews, which revealed particular themes or categories. The open coding process (Corbin, 2008) allowed me to classify these themes or commonalities from each teacher interview and student interview into particular codes or phrases. The codes or phrases were developed out of the thoughts and ideas shared across the interviews as those related to student achievement through teacher interactions and expectations. Table 10 displays the themes that surfaced from the initial coding of combined teacher and student interviews. The major codes during first order or open coding were: Positive Tones, Negative Tones, Interactions, Expectations, and Achievement.

Table 10

*Interview Codes for First Order Coding (15 students and 4 teachers)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas to Code</th>
<th># of Teacher</th>
<th># of Student</th>
<th>TE Code %</th>
<th>St. Code %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Motivation (SM)</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tones ( + )</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tones ( - )</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions (Int)</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations (Exp)</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement (Ach)</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming Others (BO)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior (Behave)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment (Assess)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Structure (SS)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Experience w/Teacher (PET)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Things About School (GT)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid Logic (KL)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight Students (HS)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal of Above Codes</strong></td>
<td><strong>1911</strong></td>
<td><strong>2151</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 10, the number \( n \) for teachers includes a combination of the four teachers’ responses or comments in their two interviews each and the combination of the 15 students’ responses and comments during their interviews. The actual numbers per teacher or student under each code may not seem comparable to four teachers and 15 students. For example, 227 teacher comments were recorded for negative tones and there were only 120 negative student comments recorded for the same code. There are 15 student interviews (one interview per student) total and eight teacher interviews (two interviews per each of the four teachers). There are several factors that may explain the differences. One reason may be that students are much younger in age compared to teachers with master’s degrees. Each teacher interview (two interviews per teacher) lasted at least one hour or more and student interviews lasted about 15 to 25 minutes per student. Although the researcher probed students in an effort to glean more information through the interviews, student answers were much shorter. Exemplars for positive tones are: A 5th grade Black male shared, “She gives out fun activities;” “She’s a nice teacher;” and “She let us have extra recess.” For the opposite tone, an exemplar coded as negative was: A 7th grade Black male reported, “She yells too much;” “I get in trouble every day;”, and “Some kids don’t want to pay attention or won’t listen.”

Another example of the number of codes that may not be comparable to the number of interviewees was the blaming others code. There were 5.1% blaming others code recorded by teachers and 1.0% blaming others code recorded by students. Relatively, students talked more about positive situations and positive interactions with their teachers; rather than discuss the negative aspects.

Tone is broken down into positive and negative tones in relationship to the culture of high or low (positive or negative) expectations, achievement, and behaviors as shown in
Table 12. In Table 10, there were 16.2% *positive tone* comments coded for teachers and 20.4% *positive tone* comments coded for students. Again, the codes represent 15 student interviews and 8 teacher interviews (since teachers were interviewed twice). There were 11.9% *negative tone* comments coded for teachers and almost half as many student comments with a 5.6% coded for *negative tones*. However, the comparison of 20.4% students to 16.2% teacher positive comments and 5.6% negative students and 11.9% teacher negative comments may provide support about students’ resilience and their positivity.

Student interactions had the greatest number of comments with 23.6% coded comments in this category and teachers recorded 15.2% *interaction* comments. Students seemed to value the interaction between students and teachers at a higher rate than teachers. As students made 8.4% more comments about interactions than did teachers, these interactions seemed to be more important to students. Interactions probably can be translated into relationships for students. Relationships are established through interactions. Research supports that a teacher’s interactions or their responses and relationships with students are crucial to the achievement of Black male students (Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Vallarreal, and Johnson, 2012; Rashid, 2009; Roorda, Koomen, and Split, 2011). It is very important for teachers to establish a positive relationship to keep Black male students engaged in learning. Exemplars for interactions include: A 5th grade White male stated, “He gives us great opportunities, he does gifts for us.”

*Expectations* and *achievement* categories are similar in that each are close in number between teacher and student comments, with a slight difference in the number of *achievement* comments. This exemplar from a Black 5th grade teacher represents a
response coded for expectations: “The stronger ones will all take their time to go back and underline and highlight the passages.”

This response from a Black 5th grade male teacher was coded achievement: “They will be working on fluency skills, grammar, handwriting, spelling, and computer skills.” There were 19.2% teacher comments and 17.8% student comments on achievement. There was a tie in the expectations category with 15.5% teacher comments and 15.5% student comments. The category of blaming others indicates a much smaller percentage with 5.2% teacher comments and only 1% of the students’ comments, but the teacher category is much greater than students by approximately a 5:1 ratio. The behavior category recorded 4.5% teacher comments on behavior and only 2.6% comments from students, showing there seemed to be more teacher concern about behavior than students.

The following table (Table 11) disaggregates the data from Table 10 into greatest to least by percentages for each code category. For example, achievement was the highest percentage of teacher codes from Table 10 with 19.2% and interactions was the highest percentage of student codes in Table 10 with 25.9%. Table 11 lists the categories separately for teachers and students in order from the greatest to the least.
These major themes in Table 10 were common in both teacher interviews and student interviews. There were 1,911 total teacher comments coded when adding each code column and there were 2,151 total student comments tracked when adding the column of each tracked code. Then the percentage for each teacher and each student columns were calculated. The codes identified in both teacher and student interviews included: student motivation (SM), positive and negative tones (+ / -), interactions (Int), expectations (Exp), achievement (Ach), blaming others (BO), behavior (Behave), assessment (Assess), school structure (SS), previous experience with teacher (PET), great things about school (GT), kid logic (KL), and highlight students (HS). Each of these themes will be discussed in more detail with participant exemplars.
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

In Table 10, there are themes that had minimal student or teacher responses with less than 2.5% of coded units from either teacher comments and/or student comments. These themes seemed to have less impact on the interactions between the teacher and students in participating classrooms. These themes with less impact included the following: student assessments (Assess), school structure (SS), the great things about school (GT) that students shared, if a student had a particular teacher previously (PET), kid logic (KL) or a students’ way of thinking, and teachers highlight students (HS). Teachers highlight students meant that the teacher really focused on positive traits or characteristics about a student in the class.

First, I will discuss the major themes that surfaced from the combined teacher and student interviews. The top major themes from these interviews were: interactions, achievement, positive tones, expectations, negative tones, and student motivation. In comparing teacher interviews with student interviews, the two most frequently mentioned themes in Table 11 that appeared in student interviews were interactions (25.9%) and positive tones (20.4%); the two most frequently mentioned themes for teachers were achievement (19.2%) and positive tones (16.2%). Whereas, interactions was the highest response from student interviews the teachers’ highest response was achievement. From both teachers and students, positive tone comments are in the top two categories from all theme codes.

Qualitative Analysis: Axial Coding of Interview Questions

The second phase in the process was axial coding, which is the process of narrowing the 13 categories from open coding to four broader categories or themes. Table 12 identifies the common codes or themes that surfaced out of the axial coding of teacher and student interviews.
The common themes that emerged from axial coding included teacher relationships with students, culture of high expectations and high achievement, culture of low expectations and low achievement, and blaming/deficit-thinking. Teacher relationships with students are comprised of student motivation and teacher interactions. Student motivation encompasses extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic rewards or motivations are those tangible rewards to which an individual equates a level of value to the reward. An individual may be motivated to do something in order to receive the reward.
Teacher relationships with students: Extrinsic motivators. Based upon both teacher and student interviews, there seem to be multiple extrinsic rewards teachers are giving students as a way to motivate students in their learning or to improve scores and/or grades. From the 15 students interviewed, 11 students shared various types of extrinsic rewards given by their teachers as an effort to motivate them. A teacher (5th grade, Black female teacher) shared, “I have found with, sometimes with our population of students, extrinsic rewards are still needed and are helpful.” Another teacher 5th grade, Black male teacher explained, “If they (students) can make it all week without any behavior mark and have their homework and assignment book for a whole week, which means they have really been on it, and then you know, they get a reward. Everyone gets to see them at lunch time with their special treat. There are some kids who make it every week.” Extrinsic rewards that have been used in motivating students include good grades, extra recess time, and edible treats. A student (5th grade, White male student) gladly reported, “He (teacher) does what they call Fudge Fridays, for Good All Week people, people who do their work and stuff, get brownies, pickles and stuff.” Another student (5th grade, Black male student) shared, “She’s a nice teacher. She gives us fun activities sometimes. At other times she let us have extra recess at times. She’s awesome.”

Extrinsic incentives and rewards are also prevalent in motivating middle school students. One example is a direct quote from a 7th grade, White female teacher: “I took out my bag of peppermints, I just run around and I put peppermints on all the desks of the students who are doing what they’re supposed to do.” She describes that a student called out, “Hey I want peppermint”. “Oh no, I’m sorry this is for the students who are working quietly and were on task. Maybe some other day when I see you doing that then you might
get one too.” A second example of this kind of motivational strategy is characterized by the other 7th grade, White female teacher commenting:

I do a lot of that (treat giving) as strategies really to get them to show academic growth I do individualized incentives. They grow a certain percentage on Acuity (formal testing). From Acuity 1 to Acuity 2, they each get a soda. We've had a pizza party first period one time when everybody showed growth.

Teachers seem to utilize a variety of extrinsic rewards with the expectations to motivate students to do well in school. Other extrinsic rewards that teachers used to motivate students included positive verbal praise, encouragement, and positive interaction between the student and teacher.

Several students shared these comments about extrinsic motivation:

- “My teacher likes me very much!”
- “Hearing that I am doing a good job is motivating.”
- “I know my teacher likes me because when we raise our hands, I am picked first, second, third, or fourth.”

Teacher relationships with students: Intrinsic motivators. Conversely, intrinsic rewards come from within and satisfy an individual’s inner thirst for achievement, appropriate behavior, and feeling good (Rooney, 2015). Intrinsic rewards imply that students motivate and encourage themselves, for example students might tell themselves, “I did a really good job, even if no one noticed. I did great on that assignment despite what the teacher said or didn’t say.” One 5th grade, Black male teacher declared, “Our ultimate goal of course is for it to be like intrinsic where they do the right thing because it’s just the right thing to do.” A 7th grade, White female teacher announced, “He seems to be internally motivated to do well at least reasonably well in his grades. I think that's
important to him. Even though he's quiet, there haven't been too many occasions that -- like if I pass out progress reports if he's missing something then he'll come and ask for the assignment. He doesn't seem to want to bother me but wants to do what he needs to do. He's pretty self-motivated I think by his grades.” As represented in Table 12, there were very few (19) comments combined from teacher and student interviews on intrinsic motivation.

**Teacher relationships with students: Positive interactions.** Positive interactions that could enhance teacher relationships with their students are described in this section. The interactions through connections, communication, contact, and collaboration among individuals can determine the tone and quality of any relationship. Positive interactions can motivate individuals in accomplishing tasks and being productive. When teachers engage in positive interactions with students in their classrooms, they have a powerful tool in getting students to accomplish the goals set before them (De Jong, Tartwijk, Verloop, Veldman, and Wubbles, 2012). Interactions are verbal, non-verbal, or gestures that serve as a means of communicating positively or negatively with someone else. General classroom procedures seem to be an important aspect of the interactions between teachers and students. The projection of positive interactions may be displayed or communicated through a smile, a head nod, a positive comment, and/or in the form of a treat or prize. Teachers interact with their students in the classroom setting and possibly in unstructured settings such as the hallway, cafeteria, and arriving and/or dismissing from school. A 5th grade, Black, male teacher indicated, “I kind-of like to have that balance between having fun and then being really strict. It’s like at first we built a rapport but then I want them (students) to know like we are: it’s business because this is school, we have a lot to do, and we have a lot to learn.”
Some interactions involved intimate sharing by the student to the teacher. One (5th grade, Black, male teacher) teacher stated, “He (student) would just tell me like how nervous he was, like saying, ‘I’m so nervous.’ But he did a really good job.” A 5th grade, Black, male student reported, “I feel like you can talk to her (his teacher) on any topic and stuff. So I know that it is right down easy to talk to her.” Another example of positive interactions between student and teacher is a 7th grade, White, male student sharing, “she (his teacher) is one of my top three favorite teachers because she understands me and listens to me when I talk to her, and she helps me with my grades and all that.” Students recognize the importance of interactions through listening and being heard by their teacher.

A 5th grade, White, male student describes additional interactions about his teacher, “He (his teacher) told everybody to do the right thing. If we don’t want, he doesn’t want anyone to get off track or like get held back or anything. So he encourages us and tells us to do things right. He tells us to do a lot of things so when we get older, we’re used to doing things right.” A 5th grade, Black, male student stated positive interactions with his teacher, “Yes, my teacher, he likes me very much. If we like have our work and be good up there and he’s determined to see that we get the answers right, he (Black male teacher) either smile or give us a high five or give us something to let us know we did a good job.”

Culture of high expectations and high achievement: High expectations/positive tone. The culture of high expectations and high achievement includes expectations, achievement, and behaviors through an avenue of positive tones. McKnown and Weinstein, (2008) quoted, “Teachers may provide higher quality instruction to students from whom they expect more. Children from groups who are the beneficiaries of higher expectations will benefit from greater exposure to high-quality instruction” (p. 236).
Teacher expectations for students can be communicated through positive interactions to convey high student expectations and high student achievement. High expectations are a belief that students will or should achieve at high levels, excelling beyond the average or the norm. Teachers establish and/or set levels of expectations. Those expectations could include students bringing pencils to class every day, students staying in their seats, students improving their scores on assessments, or students excelling in academics. Teachers communicate what the expectations are for their students behaviorally and academically. For example, a 7th grade, White, female teacher shared, “My expectation for the academic growth was for them (her students) to show growth on their Acuity (assessments).” Another example of a teacher’s expectation is communicated when a 5th grade, Black, female teacher stated,

My expectations would be for him to finish out the year here at our school with the positive spirit; to continue to do what he is capable of doing and to feel good about himself; to know that he is a good helper; and that he is appreciated. I would want him to continue to feel that he can contribute, regardless as to where he is academically. To know that we appreciate him and he is part in a very important part of the class and that people respect him. I want him to leave here encouraged.

These are examples of a few teachers stating high expectations for their students and/or class. Fourteen of the 15 students interviewed, shared that “yes!” their teacher set high expectations for the whole class. There were 157 student references of high teacher expectations during the student interviews. A 5th grade, White, male student indicated his perceptions of some high expectations that had been placed on the class by the teacher, “He (teacher) expects us to work at it, he like don’t want us to give up. He is okay with mistakes and stuff but he said, ‘don’t give up, that’s the worst thing to do is give up.”
When asked if the teacher set high expectations for individual students, 11 out of 15 interviewees responded that “yes” their teacher set high expectations for them individually. A 7th grade, White male stated, “Yes. Like any other teachers, you would want to have high expectations for your class but in order for you to have high expectations if you see the students care, and then have to surpass where they are, to have even higher expectations.” However, one student did not believe the teacher set these high expectations for individual student, but rather for only the class as a whole: However, a 5th grade, White, male student replied to the question with the following response, “I don’t think she has, probably it is the whole class. Like, she does not talk to one single person; she talks to the whole class.”

Students’ indicated nearly a level of three times as many high expectations (157) replies compared to low expectation (54) comments. These replies and comments are responses from the student interview questions (Appendix 8) related to teacher expectations of their academics and behaviors. The teacher interviews showed a significantly different comparison when considering high and low expectations. The teacher responses from their second round of interviews indicate there were 88 low expectations (49%) charted/quoted and 92 high expectations (51%) recorded. This shows that students had 65 more quotes or comments on their teachers’ maintaining high expectations for them then their actual teachers did. Another 7th grade, White, female teacher reflected leaning more towards a positive reaction of teacher expectations as she shared, “I feel that this class is going to do well. I think I may have one or two that will not pass. I think this is going to be a really good year for my students.”

**Culture of high expectations and high achievement: Achievement/positive tone.** Teachers’ high expectations play a significant role in students achieving
academically when teachers deliberately establish and communicate high expectations for all students. Teachers’ expectations of students can definitely have a positive effect on students. According to Dimitri and Mieke (2011); Rowley (2011); and Rubie-Davis (2009), teacher expectations influence student achievement. If teachers believe or perceive students can master particular skills or obtain certain goals, and then research shows that students rise to the level of teacher expectations. There were 409 student responses on achievement in a positive light and 259 positive achievement quotes from teachers. A White 5th grade male student stated, “He (teacher) is teaching me well and he challenges us with our math, just with anything that we do. A couple of things are easy but a lot of things are challenging to me.” When asked what academic goals the teacher has set for the class, a 7th grade, White, male student replied:

Well, she always wants us to get good grades. That is like our top priority, but there are kids in there who complain about writing and other stuff. However, the teacher wants us to write and to do our best, because it is mandatory for English.

A 5th grade, White, male student revealed that, “yes!” his teacher sets high expectations for the class because:

The teacher wants us to do well on our progress reports. He wants us to talk to our parents and show them all the good we are doing, so we can stay on it and we do not get bad grades.

**Culture of high expectations and high achievement: Behavior/positive tone.** A White 7th grade teacher defined her solution to promoting a conducive to learning environment with the connection between achievement and behavior when she said, “If we are really going to promote a learning environment then we have to make sure that learning is the top priority. Then anything that interferes with learning is handled swiftly and with
enough retribution that the behavior stops.” Another 7th grade, White teacher discussed behavior expectations for her class as follows:

The kids are very aware of what my rules are and so forth. They are allowed to get up and get a tissue or put their papers away where they want. I am not a "Raise your hand to be able to move" and they respect that. They know when to get up, when not to get up. I think it is just the behavior that is taught and they can conform to it very easily once taught and enforced. It always has to be enforced because the moment you let that go, then you have problems.

There were 82 comments tracked for behavior in relationship to high achievement and positive tone from both teacher and student interviews. Out of the 82, 51 comments were recorded from teacher interviews in reference to behavior expectations and goals for the class and specific students. A 5th grade, Black teacher commented on a specific student in his class on that student’s behavior:

As far as behavior, he is a sweet kid, nice kid. He gets along with the other kids. He got along with most kids, there are some socio-economic and racial breakdown in my class with more Black students then White students. He is one of the minorities in class, but he gets along with all kids, which is a neat thing. I think too he has been a part of the school and the community for a while.

The behavior expectations for school is “to be good and to do the right thing,” as expressed by a 5th grade, White, male student when asked what are the behavior expectations for his school. A 5th grade, Black, male student articulated, “We are not supposed to get an attitude or anything. We always do what the teacher says. If she said sit
down, we have to sit down. Student seem to be clear on the behavioral expectations in connection to high achievement. A 7th grade, White, male student responded with the following comment when asked what were the goals for behavior in that classroom, “Do not talk, listen to the teacher and follow directions. When we are in a group, the teacher says we can keep our voice to a one, that means whisper, do not get up out of your seat, and you have to raise your hand.” A 7th grade, Black, male student elaborated on behavioral expectation reminders his teacher gave the class,

Usually she tells us is if somebody makes a mistake in the class, like breaks it down, but not to shame anyone badly but like just small things. She tells the whole class what her rules are again. Or if we did not break the rule but she saw somebody else in the hallway doing something, she just brings it back up basically to refresh us about her expectations and reminds us that she does not want to see us in trouble for doing something stupid.

As a summary to establishing a culture of high expectations and high achievement through positive behavior, a 7th grade, White, male student delivered the message on what the behavior goals are for his classroom and if the teacher sets behavior goals about what students are expected to do, “She has behavior goals just like any other goals.”

However, in the subsequent major theme on low expectations, there are many more negative comments from teachers (227) regarding negative tones for achievement and behavior than the 51 positive comments referenced in the preceding section. This will be expounded upon in the section titled, Culture of Low Expectations and Low Achievement: Negative Tones for Expectations, Achievement, and Behavior.

**Culture of low expectations and low achievement: Low expectations.**

Low teacher expectations for students are often communicated to students through negative
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

interactions, comments, and/or nonverbal communication. If a teacher maintains low expectations for a student or particular students, then a student may not strive to the level of his/her full potential. “I daily have kids on the list of priority school (alternative school placement for students who are suspended from their home school) that I assess and I can just guarantee that there is always at least two or three students in that class that are now out of the class for the day because of those issues”, quoted a 7th grade, White, female teacher. Teachers extend and/or remediate instruction for students in regards to what their levels of expectations are for each student.

The larger number of low expectation responses came from teachers with 88 comments and only 54 low expectation responses came from student interviews. A 7th grade, White teacher indicated, “A general expectation that for the most part so that kids could participate in class, counting their homework that was reported, but in my experience since I came back to teaching it has been that most of them do not. They do not participate; they do not care about their homework. There are some [students] that do, but over 50% I would say do not seem to think it is important or valuing enough that they put the effort to it.”

Another example of low expectations came from a Black, 5th grade teacher:

- “If I’m teaching fractions, I’m going to still be reviewing, I have to still review multiplication, I still have to, I can’t just focus totally on multiplication, of fractions, of mixed numbers.

- They come in and they go to their desk. Then I have to send that section because otherwise they will be back there talking, playing around, starting passing information that’s not even related to school.

- We have to push them, this class so much harder to get the work in and to do the
work and to understand.

An example of a student experiencing low teacher expectations in the classroom was when the student was asked, “Is there anything the teacher does to let you know she has high expectations for you?” A 7th grade, White male replied, “No, I don’t think she comes out and tells us and when students are misbehaving, she does not do anything about it.” Another example of low expectations a 7th grade, Black, male student shared is, “Like if we are just like silent talking, she will yell. She will just yell, if someone is making a noise, she will do more yells than you all think.”

One teacher (7th grade, White, female teacher) told that part of her classroom procedures is to “not pass out pencils” to students even if a student arrives to class without a pencil or if the lead breaks while in class. A 5th grade, Black, male student reported, “Well sometimes when the teacher is talking to the other students, normally she gets really frustrated then helping them do work, she will start yelling.” Other responses from this student included, “He might yell at us” and “sometimes the teacher acts different with them (other students) because, he has kids that are like bad, like Harold who will just say random stuff and then the teacher has to put Harold in the hallway.” A fifth grade, White male explained, “Well if we talk a lot she (Black, female teacher) will start giving us detention. So if you want to play, you do not want to get detention.” A 7th grade, Black, male student had several negative interactions with his teacher based upon his following comments:

- “I am getting in trouble every day in there.”
- “Not quite everyday but like ever since I have been there I have been getting so many referrals.”
Culture of low expectations and low achievement: Negative tones for expectations, achievement, and behavior. As I indicated earlier, teachers made proportionately more negative comments than did students. For example, 259 teacher comments were coded as positive and 227 were coded as negative. With students though, the positive comments (409) compare to the negative comments (120) represent a much wider gap.

A 5th grade, Black, male student reported what the consequences are for inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, “If someone has bad behavior they won’t have recess. Or if some do not totally get their work done, then they do not have recess.” Another 7th grade, White, male student shared the following behavioral expectations in a negative light:

Most of the kids are not that good in her class because they talk all the time and do not listen to the teacher. I do not like going to school because I get bullied sometimes for being a good kid, because most of the kids are bad.

There is a negative impact on achievement when behavior goals are not clearly defined for students according to Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, and Chen, (2012). A 7th grade, White male student claimed, “No, she did not discuss that. The behavior, I think we didn't really discuss behavior that much.” Another exemplar of negative impact is: “When you’re in an environment where the majority of the students do not value their education and do not respect authority, then it gets to a situation where students are cheering one another on to be disrespectful,” as described by a White, 7th grade teacher.

Culture of low expectations and low achievement: Negative interactions.

Negative interactions teachers employ with students have an impact on low student
achievement and lower student expectations (Pianta, R.C., 1999). An example of a negative interaction is the comment by a 7th grade, White, female teacher who stated:

That particular class period has been very challenging because there are several students in that class period that can be volatile. So in that class in particular, I have had correspondence with email and otherwise with the assistant principal. I am out of corners; I just don’t have anywhere else to divide these kids up because there are so many that potentially got into conflict with one another. Some have issues with defiance or have issues with other teens and because of the number of referrals that they have had.

This same teacher communicated the following:

It has everything to do with effort. As far as the overall achievement in the class, I can tell you that I have not had a single class this whole year that has had 50% of the students with passing grades. When you’re in an environment where the majority of the students do not value their education and do not respect authority, then it gets to a situation where they’re cheering one another on to be disrespectful.

Another 5th grade, Black, female teacher revealed:

She (a student) is doing that (being disrespectful) because she does it at home. But see, I am thinking, ‘Mother!’ Apparently, did not realize the child was being disrespectful at home, but because the mom has allowed the child to act like this since she was such a little person, the mother assumes that it is okay.

A Black, 7th grade, male student disclosed his negative interactions with his teacher during the interview:

Some of the work that we will be doing in class, it would be hard, like some teachers, they do not help, like help the students out when they need to. Like there
was one day that I needed help, but this teacher just ignored me and did not decide to help me. So I have to figure it out by myself and stuff.

**Blaming/deficit-thinking.** Blaming is an opportunity to find fault with programming, individuals, and/or a situation. During student and teacher interviews, there were comments registered as blaming in various categories of *blaming others* or lacking efficacy for taking responsibilities for ones actions. The categories include blaming curriculum, environment, discipline, leadership, teachers, students, and/or families as interview questions were answered. From 107 comments made during teacher and student interviews, 83% blaming comments were made by a total of four teachers interviewed and 17% blaming comments were made by four students of the total 15 students interviewed. These four students blamed their peers for disrespectfulness, not meeting high expectations, talking in class, and being in trouble. A 5th grade, Black, male student described a situation of blaming a classmate for his own inappropriate behaviors:

I did it really, but I did not do it on purpose because I was trying to play. He was okay, but we were playing war and he tried to tell me I do not have to play anymore, and then that is when I did it (choking him). One of my friends went to go tell the teacher I was choking him for making up stuff.

One 7th grade, Black, male student communicated, “I should not be in that class because all the kids are getting in trouble while in that class. So all my friends are in there and if they sit right by me, then I just want to talk.” Another 7th grade, Black, male student explained how he does in class and why:

I do pretty well in class on occasion, but sometimes I was lacking all because of the kids that were around me. Some of the kids in our classroom disrespect the teacher, and I do not think it is right for those kids to disrespect her. It is rude.
A 7th grade, White, male student shared his thoughts about the class, “A lot of people in that class cause trouble and it hurts the class. This class does not reach the high expectations the teacher sets because of a lot of the students.” All four teachers shared blaming type comments about students, families and/or leadership. A 5th grade, Black, female teacher spoke about the leadership of her school and discipline:

When I first came here we had super, super issues with discipline because, of the children. I think when I first came here; the children did not understand what was disrespect. They did not understand that you cannot talk back to teachers. I don’t think they knew, because they came from an environment where that is what they did. So kids did not understand it.

A 7th grade, White, female teacher blamed behavior, school structure, parents, lack of motivation, and expectations through highlighting a few of many blaming responses:

- As far as the overall achievement, I have not had a single class whole year that has had any 50% of the students’ passing grades. In addition, this particular class period has been very challenging because there are several students that can be volatile and some students cannot sit next to a particular person. We just don’t have anywhere else to divide these kids up because there are so many that potentially get into conflict with one another or have issues with defiance.

- Daily, I have kids on the list for priority school (alternative classroom off site for students who have had multiple behavioral infractions at their home school) that I assess and I can just guarantee there is always at least two or three students in class that are now out of the class for the day because of behavioral issues. This particular class period was my best behaved class until November when they added
about six to eight students to the class, now it has become my worst behaved class just overnight.

- The lack of motivation for some of students and because of the disruption that happens frequently in class, even those students that are motivated, sometimes struggle because there is so much upheaval.

A Black, male teacher reported the following situations where someone or something was interfering with student learning, “Sadly, I call the grandparents and their ultimate answer was to say he is just off in the head. They knew the mom was on a lot of drugs when the child was born, ‘therefore he is just off.’” This teacher also shared how the student is not putting forth much effort and “there could be some emotional things or some type of depression. I know there are home issues and it comes out in different ways, like acting out.”

From 107 comments, teachers made five times as many blaming comments compared to those made by students. Teachers blamed multiple sources including students in general, families, circumstances, behaviors, and lack of student motivation. Whereas the four students who mentioned blaming statements in their interviews blamed their peers for classroom situations, such as being in trouble, lower expectations, and inappropriate behaviors.

In summary, the analysis of teacher and student interviews through the open coding process, resulted in 13 themes, which included these major themes: interactions, motivation, expectations, achievement, and blaming/deficit-thinking. The second round of analysis, which used axial coding resulted in these four common themes: teacher relationships with students, high expectations and achievement, low expectations and
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

achievement, and blaming. This analyzed interview data gives credence to the intertwined outcomes of teacher and student interactions for motivation, positive/negative tones through interactions, teacher expectations, and student achievement.

**Qualitative Data: Observations**

Observation data was gathered by a team of three observers visiting four identified classrooms. Three observations of the whole classroom were conducted prior to individual student observations within those same classrooms. The observer team met to practice using this debriefing observation tool as a part of their field testing.

Table 13 represents the comprehensive tally results from the classroom as a whole. This table includes the researcher’s created rubric from the combination of Flanders’ Interaction Analysis and Bloom’s Taxonomy (as described in Chapter 3) for observations. Bloom’s and Young’s scripting levels provided the opportunity for observers to tally the number of times each teacher utilized these levels of positive or negative questioning techniques with students. The measure utilized for this table ranged from a high level score of 4 to the lowest level score of 1. A 1 represented low or seldom occurred. A score of 2.5 represented medium or sometime occurred and a score of 4 represented a high score or had occurred often. These scores represented how the observers rated teachers as teachers responded to or interacted with students in the classroom.

Table 13 outlines the observers’ combined scripted levels as charted on Young’s rubric for each teacher. For example, on a scale of 1 to 4, the Black, 5th grade, male teacher asked leading questions to encourage and assist students with the correct answer most of the time or often (M = 4.00) compared to the second, 7th grade, White, female teacher who only asked leading questions to encourage and assist students with the correct answer less frequently/seldom (M = 2.16). All four teachers frequently or often gave positive verbal
praise to students ranging from 2.66 to 3.83. Also, each of the four teachers was above the medium range (sometimes) with scores of 3.17 or higher for asking open-ended questions. However, the low area within teacher interactions was the category of collaborating with students to build teamwork with scores ranging from 3.83 (almost often) to 1.33 (seldom).
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## Table 13

*Classroom Observation Rating of Teachers on Young’s Rubric*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young’s Rubric</th>
<th>Observers responses (Mean)</th>
<th>Observers responses (Mean)</th>
<th>Observers responses (Mean)</th>
<th>Observers responses (Mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black 5th grade Male</td>
<td>Black 5th gr. Female</td>
<td>White 7th gr. Female (C)</td>
<td>White 7th grade Female (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings (4) OR Ignores or puts down students’ feelings (1)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions (4) OR Asks closed-ended questions</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response (4) OR Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork (4) OR Justifying authority or power (1)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer (4) OR Tells students his answer is incorrect and moves on</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives Positive Verbal Praise (4) OR Gives no verbal praise (1)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scale of 4 = high, 2.5 = medium, & 1 = low for teacher questions and/or verbal interactions w/students.*
An example of a negative interaction observed by the observation team was when a White, 7th grade, female teacher started class instruction with a negative, loud tone. An additional example from the tracked data of the classroom observation was where the same teacher gave verbal put-downs to several Black male students. A different experience of negative interaction was when a Black, 5th grade teacher exhibited negative and non-motivating comments to the class with repeatedly yelling the following directions, “No, No, No; why are you lying; have a seat; sit down; and do not come up here!” These comments coupled with a negative tone, were interpreted by the observers as unwelcoming and discouraging to students, setting an unfavorable climate within the classroom.

The observation team tracked data from each classroom for two whole class observations and four individual student observations. During these observations, interactions between teacher to the whole class and teacher to four individual students were documented. Table 14 gives a breakdown of individual student engagement recorded from the four individual observations and identified by Black and White male students.
Table 14

Student Engagement for Individual Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>D 7 Black</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>58.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>D 8 White</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>38.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>D 1 White</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>D 5 Black</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>D 9 White</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>D 10 Black</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>D 2 Black</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>D 4 Black</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>D 16 Black</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>D 13 Black</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>83.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>D 22 White</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>moved</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>moved</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>D 20 White</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>*D 11 Black</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Left class</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>50.00% *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D 17 Black</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D 14 White</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D 15 White</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The student left class one day and was in In-School Suspension (ISS) the other two days.

These individual student observations along with whole class observations will be described by focusing on what was observed in each of the four classrooms. First the whole class observation will be organized by teacher and then by what was observed during individual student observations.

**Teacher A.** Teacher A called on a variety of students to respond to the factual and inferential questions he asked and gave noticeable wait time for students to answer. This teacher paraphrased student responses. He implemented various instructional strategies that aided in engaging students in the lesson activity and the course content, i.e. think/pair/share activity. Most students were engaged in class discussion and activities and the overall classroom tone was positive. Teacher A was mobile around the classroom, keeping the discussion at a constant flow and instituting engaging activities. Students worked in small groups and the general interactions with other students were positive.
Teacher A gave positive verbal praise to students and students interacted positively with one another. Students in this class had a mean score ranging from a high of 67.5% engagement to a low of 38.7% engagement. On occasion, the teacher had to give some prompts to students to raise their hands to answer questions, but this was done in a non-obtrusive manner and students responded. However, he called on girls more consistently than boys. Additionally, this teacher had some negative interactions with Black male students.

White male student (D-8) demonstrated a range of engagement from 15.0% to 50.0%. Although this student seemed to pay attention, he struggled with getting tasks and assignments completed. He was interested in getting the girls’ answers and interacting with a fellow classmate (Student D-5). Student D-8 was most engaged at 50.0% when the teacher prompted him to complete the assigned task and when the teacher called on him to pass out books and to read out-loud a couple of times.

White male student (D-1) was a little more engaged with a mean score of 40.0% engagement. This student was absent one of the four days and the other three days sustained a range of from a low 20.0% engagement to a high of 50.0% engagement. The day this student had a 20.0% engagement, the teacher had to tell him to be quiet, he had his head down on the desk several times, and he was playing, talking, and laughing with friends. The two days Student D-1 had a 50.0% engagement, he seemed to be doing some of the assigned activities and he raised his hand to participate a few times. However, he was not always on the correct page, he talked with the boy next to him, and a few times he either had his head down or his face literally in his book. These two White males were representative of all White males in class during the whole group observation which resulted in less engagement of White males compared to other groups of students. Black
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girls seemed to be the most engaged out of the whole class group, but Black males’ engagements mean score ranged from 58.7% engaged to 67.5% engaged.

Black, male student (D-7) had a mean score of 58.7% engagement, with individual observations ranging from a low 50.0% engagement to a high 75.0% engagement. Student D-7 had to be reminded by the teacher to put away his materials from the previous subject. He pretended to be reading maintaining the look with his head down and lips moving, but was not actually reading most of the time. He was stretching, yawning, and did some mumbling. He had his hand raised a couple of times, but was not called on by the teacher. This student became more engaged when the teacher had him read aloud, when he had his hand up to answer questions, and when he was following along in his book. Student D-7 was most engaged (75.0% engagement) when he participated in the thumbs-up/thumbs-down activity and the answer he gave to the question was affirmed by the teacher.

The other Black, male student (D-5) had a mean score of 67.5% engagement. His lowest engagement was a score of 45.0% during first two individual observations and his high score of engagement was 90.0% for the last two individual observations. During the 45.0% engagement observations, Student D-5 was not on task, he yelled out although he had his hand raised, and he pretended to be reading. The teacher did refer to his answer, but shushed the student when he spoke out before being called on. Student D-5 seemed to be glancing at Student D-8’s papers for answers as he interacted with that student. Student D-5 doubled his engagement to 90.0% during the last two individual observations by having his materials out, participating in class discussion, and having the teacher confirm his responses to the questions. Teacher A gave this student positive verbal praise, “I heard you say something really good (Student D-5).” This student’s hand was raised multiple times and he shared verbal answers to the questions the teacher posed. Student D-8
interacted with Student D-5 most of the time in each class setting, but in a more positive manner by completing assignments and discussing the lesson topic on those days where he was engaged 90.0% of the time.

**Teacher B.** Teacher B’s whole group instruction represented very traditional instructional practice. During whole group instruction, the teacher asked factual questions and called on individual students to answer one at a time. This teacher allowed adequate wait time for students to give their answers and prompted them to think about the topic. Teacher B gave verbal cues to promote higher order thinking. The overall instructional content was weak and so was classroom management. This teacher repeated general classroom rules and procedures numerous times, which is of concern since this was April and May of the school year. Often times, inappropriate behaviors were ignored, such as students not on task, students talking among themselves, and students out of their seats. Sometimes Teacher B attempted to establish a relationship or rapport with students, but comments in general to all students were negative. The teacher shushed students constantly, gave phrases like: *sit up, scoot up, and you cannot sleep in class.*

When considering student engagement among the four teachers observed, Teacher B’s class contained the most engaged student (D-4) and the least engaged student (D-2). However, the consensus of each observer was that this teacher encouraged Black male students more than any other group of students. Conversely, the two Black male students least engaged were from this classroom, ranging with overall mean scores of 12.5% engagement and 17.5% engagement. These two Black, male students were not on the correct page for their assignments, they would not read along when instructed to, at times were totally non-engaged, and one of the two fell asleep in class. One of these two students ranked as the least engaged student (D-2) of all 15 students observed individually from this
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

study. Student D-2, a Black, male student, was assessed with zero percent engagement during the first two individual observations, for a mean score of 12.5% engagement over all four observations. Student D-2 had his head down most of the time, played with items at his desk, and his face was in his hands. The one time he did raise his hand to answer a question, Teacher B did not call on him and his head went back down to his desk. This teacher asked him several times to “please sit up” and the teacher snapped her fingers at Student D-2. On the day Student D-2 was most engaged at 40.0% engagement, he raised his hand, the teacher called on him and he read out-loud in class. He still played with his jacket, played with his hands, and gave partial answers to the question posed. Teacher B referred back to his answer and confirmed his response even though it was not the exact answer. The teacher stayed with him through the discussion and guided Student D-2 in eventually getting the correct answer.

Student D-10, Black male, ranked next to the least engaged with a mean score of 17.5% engagement. This student appeared to be extremely tired; he yawned several times during two of the four times observed and fell asleep two times. His actions and noises were distracting to other students in the class. Student D-10 was engaged 5.0% of the time during the first two individual observations and 30% of the time during the last two individual observations. Teacher B gave Student D-10 very minimal attention even on his most engaged observation days (30.0% engaged). Student D-10 raised his hand to read a passage and after some time Teacher B finally called on him to read. As Student D-10 struggled with reading the passage, the teacher quickly called on another student to “help him out” by reading the passage for him. Teacher B ignored Student D-10 most of the time during the four individual observations. However, when she did interact with Student D-10 it was mostly negative. Teacher B reprimanded Student D-10 for distracting her and
others. Teacher B stated to Student D-10, “If you are distracting me, then I know you are distracting others”.

Due to the low number of White male students in Teacher B’s classroom and obtained parental permission, there was only one White male student observed in this classroom, Student D-9. Student D-9 maintained a mean score of 60.0% engagement. He was engaged in class 60.0% of the time during each of the four individual observations. Student D-9 raised his hand consistently during all four observations to answer questions, he participated in class discussion, and he offered answers to questions through class discussion. Teacher B called on this student to share his answers, he made eye contact with the teacher, he paid attention in class, and the teacher paraphrased his answer. He did his assignments and even tried to engage a Black, male student in the lesson.

The student most engaged out of the 15 students observed was Student D-4 (Black male). He had a mean score of 92.5% of engagement, ranging from 80% engagement to 100.0% engaged. Student D-4’s engagement had little to do with the teacher herself. This student demanded attention; he raised his hand constantly to answer factual questions posed by the teacher. He even engaged the teacher in conversation in which he extended his depth of knowledge in the discussion and asked inferential questions related to the discussion topic. Several times during the individual observations, this student would engage the teacher in conversation as though they were the only two people in the classroom. During one of Student D-4’s prolonged conversation he was attempting to engage with Teacher B, Teacher B interrupted Student D-4 midstream skipping over his topic and refocusing him by calling his name to answer yet another factual question. This student sat directly in the front and center of the classroom where the teacher sat facing the class, demanding attention from the teacher and keeping his hand raised constantly.
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Teacher C. Teacher C interacted with most to all students during the whole group observations. She utilized a variety of instructional strategies and her overall tone was positive and encouraging, with only a few negative comments. It was obvious to the observers that this teacher has worked on establishing relationships with her students and routines were in place. Students loved her sense of humor and students in this class interacted well with each other in general and while working in partners. Many students participated in class. Teacher C called on students, soliciting their participation but she was cautious not to embarrass students. For example she gave subtle reminders of procedural expectations instead of reprimanding students in front of the whole class. Teacher C seemed to favor Black students. Neither White males nor White females received any positive interactions and White females did not receive any interactions from the teacher during the whole group observations. Although the interactions she did give to a White male were repeated redirection for Student D-22 to be on task and focused. This student was not engaged during any of the whole group observations and then he moved to a different school prior to the four individual observations. Due to him moving to a new school, there is no data recorded for the four individual observations on Student D-22.

The other White male student (D-20) observed in this classroom maintained the third lowest mean score of 30.0% engagement during the four individual observations. Student D-20’s engagement ranged from a low score of 10.0% during the first two individual observations and a higher score of 60.0% engagement during the third individual observation and only 40.0% engaged during the last individual observation, for a total mean score of 30.0%. He seemed to have been following the teacher for a brief moment while she read a book, but was looking around the classroom. Student D-20 was generally not on task; he was observed flipping through pages, putting his head down on the desk,
reading ahead, and talking out of turn. Teacher C tried to get this student engaged, but the interactions were mostly negative, which seemed typical of how she treated White male students. Conversely, the opposite was true for the two Black male students observed in Teacher C’s classroom. She interacted in a positive and encouraging manner with Black males, maintaining a mean score range of 60.0% engagement to 95.0% engagement.

Black male student (D-16) was absent the first two observations of the four individual times, but the two times he was in class he was engaged 75.0% and 90.0% of the time. When this student returned from his absence, he realized he had missed some of the story Teacher C had been reading to the class and Student D-16 was totally engaged in the content and catching up on the story he missed. He interacted positively with the teacher and participated in class discussion of the book. He was sent to the hallway to read and get caught up in reading the book. While Student D-16 was in the hallway reading, Teacher C went out and checked on him and engaged in positive interactions. Student D-16 interacted with fellow classmates in a positive way and was truly engaged in the course content.

Student D-13 was tracked as the second most engaged student out of the fifteen with a mean score of 83.7% engagement for the four individual observations. This Black male student’s daily engagement ranged from a low of 60.0% to a high of 95.0% engagement. Teacher C interacted with Student D-13 the most of all students in the class and he was very engaged and she gave him positive verbal praise. The content was engaging, the teacher was mobile around the classroom, and she injected humor with this student in conversation. She even challenged Student D-13 with a can of soda if he could beat all other students in completing the assignment. The soda challenge engaged this student even more with the course content and the teacher stayed with his group asking leading questions and encouraging his participation.
Teacher D. Teacher D’s instruction to the whole class was strong with very well developed instructional strategies. The curriculum was solid instructionally and the activities assigned to students were grade appropriate, interesting, and allowed for student engagement with the content. Teacher D utilized emotional hooks to gain student attention, but the teacher interacted with less than half the class during both whole group observations. There were many negative behavior comments made to students by this teacher, including verbal put downs to Black male students, i.e. have a seat, go to the hall, and see me after class. There were a number of negative interactions with students, especially Black males. It did not appear that classroom rules or procedures had been practiced or reinforced, because the teacher reminded the class of the rules often. However at various times, Teacher D told a White male and a Black male to go the hallway when these students were not following her directions. These two students had the same misbehaviors, the same initial consequence, but when neither student complied by going to the hallway, Teacher D only told the Black student to stay and meet her after class. The teacher did not make any additional comments to the White student for not going to the hall as instructed. This teacher’s focus was primarily on content and materials with less emphasis on student interactions with her.

The individual student interactions with Teacher D and a Black, male student (D-11) displayed a consistent pattern of negative interactions. This student’s misbehavior was more obvious when the observation team focused on individual student observations. Student D-11 was not on task, he was very mobile around the classroom, talking and playing instead of doing the assigned instructional task. The majority of teacher interactions recorded during whole class and individual student observations with this student were negative. However, based upon Table 15, this student was out of this class
during two of the four individual observations due to his assignment to the “In-School-Suspension” room. On one of the two days he was in class, he left the classroom before the dismissal bell, but the observers were not privy to why he left class early.

Teacher D interacted similarly with the second Black male student (D-17) in her class as she did with student D-11. This teacher’s interactions with the two Black male students ranged from a low of 20.0% engagement to a high of 60.0% engagement. When she did interact with these Black male students it was with negative comments and/or actions. She gave both students constant verbal cues to pay attention, to refocus, and to sit down. This student (D-17) maintained a mean score of 40.0% engagement in class over the four individual observations. The day Student D-17 was most engaged (60.0%), he appeared to be discussing the course content with his group and doing the assignment. The teacher interacted with him and his group, discussing the topic and asking leading questions. The day Student D-17 was least engaged (20.0%), his interactions with the teacher included her shushing him, closing his folder for him, telling him to open his book, and sharing his very low grade scores with him. He then shredded his score sheet.

Teacher D’s interactions with the two White males in her class ranged from a low of 50.0% engagement to a high of 90.0% engagement. Positive interactions between these two White male students and the teacher occurred at least one to three times per observation. These two students appeared to be more focused and did not appear to be major behavior problems. They displayed more “teacher pleasing” behaviors than the two Black male students did, (meaning the two White males stayed in their seats and they did not talk out loud where the teacher could hear them). However, they were engaged in sidebar conversations with each other and were not completely focused on the content. Student D-14, White male, was most engaged for a mean score of 75.0% over the four
individual observations, with each observation ranging from his low of 70.0% engagement to a high of 90.0% engagement. Student D-14 followed the teacher’s directions on getting materials out, raised his hand to answer questions, and started immediately on the assignment. This student helped Student D-15 with his assignments by discussing the subject, giving him answers, and spelling words for him. Student D-14 and Student D-15 sat next to each other and worked together often, along with constant sidebar conversations about tattoos and general school information. Student D-15’s engagement ranged from as low as 50.0% to a high of 90.0% engagement for a total mean score of 67.5%. This student worked on the assignments, turned in homework, and raised his hand to share an answer during discussion. Student D-15 had his head down during several of the observations but he stayed on task and followed directions, got his book out and completed his assignment. Teacher D did ask leading questions related to the subject and content of all students on occasion.

**Triangulation**

Collecting data from multiple sources and corroborating the results is the process of triangulation. I reviewed data from teacher interviews, student interviews, and observations. Themes that emerged from the interviews and observations were compared and various patterns were analyzed from the observation and interview data. Table 15 displays each of the four teachers interview responses compared to their own students’ interview data, and shows a comparison with the Young’s Observation Rubric data as each of the categories are outlined.

Table 15 includes the axial coding of student and teacher interviews and observation data and represents the triangulation of the interview and observation data from earlier tables. Young’s rubric was aligned to correspond with the themes or codes that surfaced
from the student and teacher interviews. For example, from the teacher and student interviews (Table 12), when there was a code for Positive Interactions, 59.3% of those coded items came from teachers and 61.3% from students. The information for observations was copied from Table 13 with a mean score from observers for each pair of items. In other words, the observers ranked the teacher higher if the teachers were “collaborating with students to build teamwork.” Teachers were ranked lower if they utilized “justifying authority of power” over students.

Table 15

Triangulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Teacher A Interviews</th>
<th>Teacher A Students’ Interviews</th>
<th>Young’s Rubric</th>
<th>Observation in Teacher A’s Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer (4) Tells students his answer is incorrect and moves on (1)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions (4) Asks closed-ended questions (1) Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response (4) Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time) (1)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Interaction</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings (4) Ignores or puts down students’ feelings (1)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork (4) Justifying authority or power (1) Gives Positive Verbal Praise (4) Gives no verbal praise (1)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.50</td>
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</table>
### TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Teacher B Interviews</th>
<th>Teacher B Students’ Interviews</th>
<th>Young’s Rubric</th>
<th>Observation in Teacher B’s Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer (4)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells students his answer is incorrect and moves on (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions (4)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response (4)</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time) (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Interaction</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings (4)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Interaction</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Justifying authority or power (1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gives no verbal praise (1)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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### Axial Codes

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<th>Teacher C Interviews</th>
<th>Teacher C Students’ Interviews</th>
<th>Young’s Rubric</th>
<th>Observation in Teacher C’s Room</th>
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<td>High Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions (4)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Tells students his answer is incorrect and moves on (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Allows wait time (how long for an answer response (4)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time) (1)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Positive Interaction

|                      | Accepts & empathizes with students’ feelings (4) | 4.00 |
|                      | Ignores or puts down students’ feelings (1) |       |
|                      | 42                                             |       |
| Negative Interaction | 51                                             |       |

|                      | Collaborates with students to build teamwork (4) | 3.83 |
|                      | Justifying authority or power(1) |       |
|                      | Gives Positive Verbal Praise (4) | 3.83 |
|                      | Gives no verbal praise (1) |       |

|                      | 8                                              |       |
|                      | 6                                              |       |
For the interviews, the numbers represent the actual number of times a category was coded in either the teacher interviews or the student interviews. Each of the four tables in Table 15 records the data per each of the four teachers, Teacher A, B, C, and D. Each individual table displays teacher interview data, students’ interview data per teacher, and observation data from each teacher’s classroom. The triangulation data in Table 15 gives opportunity for these multiple data sources to be compared by particular teachers, four students interviewed from that teacher’s class, and the observation data gathered from that teacher’s class. The four teacher interviews included a total of 191 (see Table 12) teacher comments coded as positive interactions. The table shows that Teacher A represented 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Teacher D Interviews</th>
<th>Teacher D Students’ Interviews</th>
<th>Young’s Rubric</th>
<th>Observation in Teacher D’s Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions (4)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Expectations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer (4)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response (4)</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time) (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Positive Interaction | 48                   | 62                             | Accepts & empathizes with students’ feelings (4) | 2.33               |
| Negative Interaction | 34                   | 30                             | Ignores or puts down students’ feelings (1) |                    |
|                      |                      |                                | Collaborates with students to build teamwork (4) | 1.33               |
|                      |                      |                                | Justifying authority or power(1) |                    |
|                      |                      |                                | Gives Positive Verbal Praise (4) | 2.66               |
|                      |                      |                                | Gives no verbal praise (1) |                    |
positive interaction comments, Teacher B had 54 positive interaction comments, Teacher C made 42 positive interaction comments, and Teacher D made 48 positive interaction comments for a total of 191 positive interaction teacher comments. The same holds true in the tables for negative interaction comments made by the four teachers (Teacher A = 2; Teacher B = 12; Teacher C = 8; and Teacher D = 34) for a total of 56 negative interaction comments made by teachers.

This teacher interview data is comparable and consistent with the classroom observation data. Teacher A made 47 positive interaction comments, Teacher A’s students made 62 positive interaction comments, and the observation team recorded Teacher A as 3.25 on a one to four rating scale recording that Teacher A is stronger in accepting and emphasizing with students’ feelings. These scores were compared similarly throughout Table 15.

Teacher interactions with students are charted in the paired categories of positive or negative interactions and high or low expectations teachers have for students. Overall, teacher interactions through behaviors with students seem more positive from the teachers’ perspective. Collaboration with students and allowing students the opportunity to respond to answers recorded by Teacher B and Teacher D are not consistent in relationship to the observations. Teacher D’s interview indicated 48 positive interaction comments based upon Teacher D’s responses in the interviews and 34 comments of negative interactions. However, Teacher D’s students’ interviews indicated 62 positive interaction comments and 30 negative interaction comments. The observation data rated a low 1.33, which means, from the perspective of the observers, that Teacher D justifies authority or power instead of collaborating with students to foster teamwork. Teacher B’s interview data is skewed like that of Teacher D where the interview comments slant more toward positive interactions
between students and teachers, but the observation team documented middle-range ratings around 2.66 down to 1.33 on a 1-4 scale. These ratings are average and below (2.5) in several categories. The observation data indicate Teacher A and Teacher C as being more accepting and emphasizing, being collaborative, asking leading questions, asking open-ended questions, and giving positive verbal praise. This conclusion was consistent from the observations and interviews of teacher and students.

The interview data and observation data did not seem to be aligned from the teacher interviews and observation data across the board. Teacher and student interview data seemed to reflect higher levels of positive interactions and high expectations, but the observation data identify Teacher A and Teacher C to have displayed higher levels of expectations than Teacher B and Teacher D. During the observations, these teachers (B and D) displayed much lower levels of collaborating with students and allowing for wait time.

There were several occasions in which teacher-to-student interactions seemed to be more negative in the observations. In regard to setting high expectations for students, the observers witnessed teachers setting student academic and behavioral expectations through the use of extrinsic motivation and/or rewards. Teachers primarily utilized extrinsic motivators, such as food, to encourage students to complete work, follow the directions, and meet expectations. The extrinsic motivators were used by teachers in an effort to get students more engaged and involved in meeting teachers’ expectations. The food offerings did seem to motivate some students. Often times during the interviews, students talked about food treats or rewards as motivators. Students seemed to be willing to work towards earning food and other reward. However, some students in this study did not follow through on doing what was required in order to receive the extrinsic reward.
Trends noted during the triangulation of interview and observation data include: Teachers’ and students’ interviews were comparable to each other. In Table 11, both teachers and students ranked *positive tones and expectations* second and third highest of all categories. However, observers ranked teachers lower due to the negative comments noted during the observations. By common grade level, Teacher A was more positive than Teacher B and Teacher C was more positive than Teacher D. There were five times more negative comments recorded from student interviews for Teacher D than from students of Teacher C. The observers recorded far more negative interactions from teachers during the observations as compared to the number of negative comments students shared during the interviews. Overall, students seem to be more positive toward their teachers because the level of their negative comments did not proportionally match what the observers recorded. Also, in Table 15 Teacher D and her students proportionately had more negative comments, 34 negative comments from Teacher D and 30 negative student comments. The trends for Teachers A and C indicate alignment with the observers’ data, Teacher A had 47 positive interactions and 2 negative interactions in the interviews and the observers’ scores were 3.25 and greater. Teacher C had 42 positive interactions and 8 negative interactions in the interviews and observation scores were 3.42 or greater.

In general, there were some common themes for all teachers. All four teachers utilized content and materials that were educationally sound. Table 13 displays all four classroom teachers utilized open-ended questions during instruction rating 3.17 through 4.0. Three of the four teachers were more likely to accept and empathize with students’ feelings with observers’ rating from 3.0 to 4.0. Observers rated positive verbal praise ranging from 3.5 to 3.83. Generally, the instruction in the classrooms was delivered traditionally and technology was utilized in each room at various degrees. Although the
Findings for the research questions. After completing the analysis and triangulation of results, I returned to the research questions and answered each below. More detail about these findings will be described in Chapter 5.

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers’ expectations? The perceptions of 15 Black males in regard to their teachers’ expectations appeared not to be any different than any other Black or White male students in the study. The perceptions of students in this study seemed to depend upon the relationships formed between teacher and students.

Research Question 2. What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students? There were no explicit distinctions between the four middle school and elementary school teachers in this study and how they express their expectations of students. The differences arose when considering individual teachers and how they relate to their students. It appeared that through building relationships comes expression of expectations.

Research Question 3. In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed? Based upon Table 15, teachers, students, and observers would agree that expectations have been communicated, but the variances come into play when considering whether the expectations are high or low. There are three distinct differences in comparing how teachers’ expectations are expressed (high or low) and communicated to students. Based upon the teacher interviews, teachers seem to believe they are communicating expectations to students and offering incentive type motivations to ensure that expectations are met. All
four teachers seem to think they are communicating behavioral and academic expectations to their students. Observers recorded two teachers expressing higher expectations and the other two expressing lower expectations. Students seemed to be more positive in their comments than the observers ranked the teachers. Students seem to believe that teachers established high expectations. The students of all four teachers expressed more high expectations than low expectations through their interviews. Observers noticed implicit bias with each teacher.

**Summary**

The purpose of this research was to consider students’ motivation and perceptions based upon teacher interactions and engagement of students. The research questions addressed the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers’ expectations, and considered differences in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students. The research questions also examined the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compared to how teachers’ expectations were expressed. During the open coding phase, *achievement, interactions, positive tones,* and *expectations* were the major categories. These were in the top three for either teachers and/or students. In the second coding or axial phase, *teacher relationships with students, culture of high expectations, culture of low expectations,* and *placing blame/deficit-thinking* surfaced from the interviews (students and teachers). The analyzed data were triangulated and these themes were most important across the teacher and student interviews, as well as the observations: *teacher/student interactions, teacher expectations, motivation,* and *blaming.*
Abstract
This study investigated how teacher expectations contribute to the educational and academic experiences for male students, especially Black male students. A combination of teacher and student interview data and observations in four classrooms were the primary sources of data in fifth and seventh grade settings. The findings indicate that: 1) The perceptions of students in this study seemed to depend upon the relationships formed between teacher and student. 2) There were no explicit distinctions across the study comparing the two middle school teachers to the two elementary school teachers in this study and how they expressed their expectations of students. However, implicit bias for each teacher was identified by the observers, which seemed to indicate that each teacher related better with a certain type of student (Black females, White males, high-achieving Black males, and struggling Black males depending on the teacher). 3) The team of three independent observers rated the level of expectations observed as lower than the students’ perceptions. The observations revealed lower rankings in areas of collaboration and wait time. 4) Achievement was the most important theme for teachers. 5) Students who seemed to enjoy a stronger relationship with the teacher appeared to be more engaged.
Keywords: Black male students; teacher expectations; qualitative; student and teacher interviews; classroom observations
Background

According to Whiting (2009), Black males as a group experience disproportionately high levels of school failure. Compared to Black females and White males, for example, Black males have the highest dropout rates, poorest achievement, and lowest test scores. According to Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro (2013), data obtained from the Bureau of Justice released a collection of data comparing the disproportionate incarceration percentages by race. Of every 100,000 Black males in the United States there are 3,042 in prison, compared to 1,261 Hispanic males and 487 White males. The disproportionalities among Blacks compared to other races do not end with high percentages for incarceration, but are also prevalent in uneven rates of unemployment. In 2010, the unemployment rate was 7.5% for Asians, 8.7% for non-Hispanic Whites, 12.5% for Hispanics, and 16.0% for Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Throughout the data presented, there is one mutual experience that all Black males have in common: school.

Teachers’ expectations and how teachers’ interactions communicate those expectations to Black male students adds to a safe-learning environment in classrooms. The safe-learning environment becomes a key factor in promoting academic achievement in Black males (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi, and Vo, 2009). According to Davis (2013), the achievement gap for African American males can be explained in relationship to how schools are organized, based upon the classroom environment in the categories of curriculum issues, expectations, school achievement climate, and teaching strategies. This study will investigate common experiences in which samples of Black males (between the ages 7-14) participate.

To record sustainable achievement differences, teachers must intentionally set high expectations for students, especially Black males. According to Rosenthal and Jacobson
(1968), “details provide further evidence that one person’s expectations of another’s behavior may come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy. When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development” (p. 20).

Teachers place expectations on how students may perform academically for various reasons and teachers assert those expectations at varying degrees to influence student’s academic success. Teachers create their classroom atmospheres through establishing routines, activities, and interactions with students (Davis, 2003; Good, 1987; Rist, 2000).

**Literature on Black Males Student Achievement and Teacher Expectations**

In studying the literature on teachers’ expectations, I found four central concepts. These concepts include: teachers’ expectations for student achievement, how teachers’ expectations impact student behaviors, how teachers’ expectations are conveyed through interactions with students, and implicit bias (eg. Davis, 2013; Conroy et al., 2009; Hughes, Wu, Kwok, Vallarreal, and Johnson, 2012; Staats, 2016). The next sections will further expound on each of these concepts.

**Teachers’ expectations for student achievement.** Teacher expectations can influence the achievement of their students. Educators can embrace the challenges of cultural and gender differences in Black males and no longer allow excuses to stand in the way of sufficiently educating Black males. The majority of these excuses are not controllable by Black males; yet they are expected to perform at the same rate and on the same standards as their White male counterparts. Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, Rouse, and Chen (2012) commented, “Another limitation of the test-score gap research for African American boys is the lack of adequate consideration of significant protective factors that have known relations with academic performance, such as academic engagement” (p. 561).
The responsibility lies with the teacher to engage students in the lessons presented and in students’ own learning. According to Klem and Connell (2004), “Students perform better academically if they are engaged in school. Teacher support and expectations play a role in student engagement in school” (p. 262). Engaging students can be accomplished through teachers creating and maintaining a level of teacher-to-student connectedness. This can be done by each teacher displaying support and genuine concern for all students (Klem and Connell, 2004).

By displaying genuine concern and support, teachers may establish positive connections with the Black males in their classrooms. It is equally important for teachers to strive to debunk stereotypes or prejudices that they may possess. Such biases may arise from teacher’s own experiences or a lack of information about the culture and/or ethnicity of Black males.

There are disparities in the academic achievement of Black male students as compared to their White counterparts (Whiting, 2009; Shapiro et al., 2013; Compendium Report, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The achievement gaps continue to increase as Black males are treated as though they are inferior; therefore, teachers setting high academic expectations for Black males can make a difference (Davis, 2013). Teachers have the responsibility to provide equitable educational and student engagement opportunities for Black male students. Teachers need to be aware of these disparities and expect Black male students to be fully engaged in their own learning. Teachers can support their Black male students’ engagement through classroom structure and teaching styles, according to Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007).

The way a teacher communicates, connects, relates, and collaborates with a student or multiple students is important to how the interaction builds and is portrayed. Ultimately,
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

teachers possess power over whether a child will succeed academically or not succeed academically. Teachers’ expectations can be positive or negative, supportive or unsupportive, encouraging or discouraging, and helpful or destructive. It is important for all teachers to understand how their high or low expectations impact all students academically.

Teachers extend and/or remediate instruction for students in regards to what their levels of expectations are for each student. DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2011) and Rist (2000) research suggested that teachers’ own prejudices against Black students resulted in lower expectations, which ultimately affected the academic achievement of those Black students. These low expectations can be birthed out of prejudices against Black students. Teachers maintaining low expectations for Black students based upon race prejudices are unacceptable (DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho 2011). When teachers possess biases toward Black students for any reason, then it is defaulting on their responsibilities. These biases may result in teachers establishing low expectations for Black students, which eventually decreases the academic achievement of Black students.

Teacher expectations impacting student behaviors. Educators possess an important responsibility of educating students in a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Creating a safe-to-learn environment for all students adds a sense of security and comfort that can be equally as important as physical safety. According to Conroy et al., 2009, when teachers create a safe learning environment within a positive classroom atmosphere, the level of comfortable can encourage students to take learning risks within that environment. These are opportunities for student growth academically and socially based upon teacher expectations, classroom structure, and student behaviors.
“Teacher Power” (Rist 2000) can be concerning if teachers are given the latitude to discourage learning or negatively reinforce inappropriate behaviors within the classroom. Once teachers understand the level of influence their level of expectation have on each student, then teachers can appropriately address how they communicate those expectations to each student in and outside the classroom. When teachers are positive and encouraging to students through their day-to-day interactions, then the results are a win-win situation for all.

According to Conroy et al. (2009), when teachers create a safe learning environment, which lies within a positive classroom atmosphere where children are comfortable and encouraged, then students will take learning risks within that environment. These achievement opportunities will foster student growth academically and socially. Additionally, a safe learning environment also means establishing high expectations for students.

However, some educators base academic expectations upon assumptions of what they think certain students can do or how they feel about particular students. Some educators, who set low expectations for students and do not maintain the structure of a safe-to-learning environment where students are free to explore, present a lack of confidence or lower expectations to students. Holloway (2000) providing insight on this subject, stated:

Many teachers failed to provide suitable instructional activities for a wide range of pupil attainment, especially those pupils at the extremes of attainment. Many teachers provided neither sufficient challenge for a range of pupil attainment nor flexibility to allow for slow and accelerated periods of learning (p. 82).
Often times, teachers will present and lead instruction directed to the masses or lower ability students rather than based upon high expectations and perceived abilities. Holloway (2000) suggested teachers do not know and/or understand the power of motivation and beliefs they possess when standing in front of a class or interacting with a group of students. Teachers may not understand how their expectations for students play a significant role in student achievement.

The atmosphere established in a classroom derives from the teacher’s expectation of each student individually and as a class collectively. Also, teacher interactions with students individually and/or collectively play a part in establishing an environment conducive to learning. A teacher’s interaction with students sets the tone for the classroom environment and also sets the example for how students will treat and interact with each other.

Students respond to various levels of expectations teachers place on them within the classroom. The value that teachers demonstrate for students impacts teacher-student interactions. If students meet or exceed teachers’ expectations, the teacher-student relationship is usually enhanced. Teachers place various levels of hope or confidence, abilities, potentials, and opportunities on their students. Teachers form these various behavioral and academic expectations for the class and students individually. These expectations are formed based upon teachers’ perceptions of what students can do and achieve or what they think students cannot do or achieve (Rist, 2000).

**Teachers’ expectations are conveyed through interactions.** Research shows that a teacher’s response and interactions to students are crucial to the achievement of Black male students (Hughes et al., 2012; Roorda, Koomen, and Split, 2011; Rashid, 2009). It is very important for teachers to establish a valuable relationship to keep Black male students
engaged in learning, and the engagement directly relates to Black student academic achievement.

The way a teacher interacts with students creates impressions with the individual student and the whole class. Teacher interactions with students in the classroom provides a model for how students end up treating each other. Their actions are often mimicked by students in the classroom, so when teachers maintain positive interactions and high expectations for Black male students, then the teacher models positive and appropriate interactions for all students (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Teacher interactions through communication, connection, and collaboration with students in a positive manner can encourage students to accomplish tasks, be productive, and establish high expectations. Teachers possessing positive interactions and high expectations with students in the classroom are influential in getting students to accomplish goals set before them. Teachers create and establish their classroom environment, which is communicated to all students through their interactions and expectations. Marzano (2010) stated, “what actually communicates expectations to students is teacher behavior” (p.82).

The interactions between individuals can nurture or destroy a relationship. Interactions between individuals are either viewed as positive or negative. The interaction through connections, communication, contact, and collaboration among individuals can determine the tone and quality of any relationship. Interactions, in the positive manner, can motivate individuals in accomplishing tasks and being productive. Positive interactions teachers possess with students in the classroom are powerful in establishing high expectations and getting students to accomplish goals set before them.

**Implicit bias may impact teacher expectations.** The stereotypes and attitudes of an individual unconsciously affect or impact their actions, understanding, and decisions.
These stereotypes and attitudes are called *implicit bias*. Implicit biases can play a major role in the classroom. A teacher’s implicit bias can cause her to change her interactions and expectations with students. According to Staats (2016), “In education, the real-life implications of implicit biases can create invisible barriers to opportunity and achievement for some students – a stark contrast to the values and intentions of educators and administrators who dedicate their professional lives to their students’ success” (p. 38).

McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) referred to implicit biases as equity traps. In other words, implicit biases can color educators’ thinking and cause them to assume that students of color will not be successful as learners. McKenzie and Scheurich, suggested various strategies for educators to overcome these equity traps or implicit biases through collaboration, training, and modeling.

**Research Methods**

This exploratory research study was conducted in two schools, including elementary fifth graders and middle school seventh graders. A combination of interviews (both teacher and students) and observations were the primary sources of data. Eight teacher interviews were conducted with four occurring in February and four at the end of the Spring semester. Sixteen students (8 Black and 8 White) were interviewed at the end of the spring semester. White male students were included in the interviews to provide baseline data and to minimize observer effects. If teachers did not realize the primary focus was on Black males, they were more likely to act naturally. Prior to the classroom observations, the four classroom teachers (two 5th grade teachers from Langston Elementary School and two 7th grade English/Language Arts teachers from Scott Middle School) were interviewed about their whole class at the beginning of the semester. Then a second interview was conducted after the first round of observations near the end of the
spring semester, which focused upon the four targeted students in each classroom (two White and two Black males).

These tools were adapted and integrated into the observation tool that was used in this study: Ned Flanders’ Interaction Analysis, Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy of higher order thinking, and Carl Glickman’s Verbal Flow (Flanders, 1964; Bloom, and Krathwohl, 1956; Glickman, 2002). Three observers participated as a team to conduct the observations, including the chair of my committee, a graduate assistant, and me. First, the observation tools were field-tested. After each observation, the observers processed their individually gathered data on the designed observation forms and reached a consensus in completing Figure 2 together. Definitions for each section of the rubric were further developed so that the three observers would agree on ratings during an observation.
### Figure 2.
Bloom’s and Young’s Observation Rubric – for Debriefing after each Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s</th>
<th>Tally</th>
<th>Young’s</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation / Create</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- create, invent, plan, compose, construct, design, imagine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis / Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- decide, choose, rate, recommend, assess, justify, prioritize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis / Analyze</td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- examine, categorize, investigate, identify, contrast, compare, explain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application / Apply</td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- show, use, complete, classify, examine, solve, illustrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension / Understand</td>
<td></td>
<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- compare, explain, discuss, restate, summarize, predict, infer, cause/effect, translate, outline, estimate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge / Remember</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- name, describe, relate, find, write, list, tell,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Justifying authority or power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asks leading questions to encourage &amp; assist students with correct answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells students his answer is incorrect and moves on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives Positive Verbal Praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives no verbal praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chapter 3, Flanders’ Interaction Analysis and Bloom’s Taxonomy were reviewed in conjunction with the research to create this observation sheet as a scripting tool to mark to level of teacher questions and/or verbal interactions with students.

H = High (score of 4) 
M = Medium (score of 2.5) 
L = Low (score of 1) 
N = Not Applicable
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Research Questions

In considering the academic performance of Black males, the following research questions guided the study focus:

1. What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers' expectations?
2. What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students?
3. In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed?

Findings

The findings section will describe the major findings from my research. Then there will be discussion on the findings focused around the three research questions regarding teacher interactions, perceptions, and teacher expectations.

Review of Major Findings

The major findings listed briefly from Chapter Four were as follows:

1. From the perspectives of Black males, they viewed their interactions with teachers as positive. Students knew what their teachers expected of them.
2. During teacher interviews, achievement was the top importance and positive tones were second. However, these were not exactly the same for students. The most important or top ranked themes for students were interactions and positive tones.
3. The observers gave lower rankings in collaboration and wait time, compared to data from teacher and student interviews.
4. Observers seemed to be more critical (with lower ratings) of the teachers than their students were. The observers noticed implicit bias with each teacher.
5. Overall, there were patterns of biases noted during the observations. Each teacher seemed to interact better with a certain type of student based upon gender and/or ethnicity. Teacher A seemed to favor Black females and Teacher B interacted better with Black higher achieving males. Teacher C seemed to have better interactions with Black Males and Teacher D interacted better with White males.

6. Students who seemed to enjoy a stronger relationship with the teacher appeared to be more engaged.

Findings Related to the Literature

In this section of Chapter Five, I will provide more details on the major research findings as they relate directly to the literature. Many of these findings can be supported by the literature review in Chapter Two. The findings in this qualitative study will be organized by the three research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of Black males in regard to their teachers’ expectations?

In my research, teacher expectations contributed to the perceptions of their students. Black male students in this study viewed their interactions with teachers as positive. The students held a high regard for what their teachers expected of them. The student interview data signified a resounding pattern in students’ communicating the assurance their teachers “like them” and have high expectations for them personally. This was common among all 15 students interviewed, including the nine Black male students.

However, independent observers’ perceptions indicated a deficiency in teachers establishing high expectations for their students in general. In fact, various teachers seemed to have favorite types of students. Three of the four teachers appeared to maintain high expectations for other student groups, such as girls, White males, and higher-
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achieving students, who were the benefactors, rather than Black males. One teacher favored Black males and seemed to have established high expectations for both Black males and Black females.

The research from multiple authors (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2007; Marzano, Davis, Rosenthal, and Jacobson, 2010) supported the notion that teachers’ classroom structure and teaching style contributes to students maintaining a sense of engagement and connection to their teachers. This connection seemed to lead students’ perceptions about their interactions with teachers as positive. Marzano (2010) stated, “What actually communicates expectations to students is teacher behavior” (p.82). The research supported my findings as Marzano (2010) indicated how easy it is for teachers to establish a positive emotional tone with all students. He suggested that teachers must confirm the same display of encouraging behaviors to all students. These positive behaviors include smiling, involving students in good-natured discussions, and engaging in appropriate physical contact with students. All students will typically respond well to positive interactions with teachers.

Also, research by Davis supports my findings on how students perceive their interactions with teachers as positive, which flows from the influence teachers had on their students in the classroom. Davis (2013) believed that teachers should never take for granted how much influence they have on Black males due to the quantity of time students spend in classrooms.

Finally, my findings are supported by Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, and Dixon (2010) who reported students’ perceptions of what teachers expect of them. They advocates that positive expectations affirm that teachers’ expectations are directly related to classroom behavior and student achievement. Teachers often set student
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expectations to maintain classroom behavior, but students’ perceptions expand below classroom behavior. Student think that teachers expect them to also concentrate in class, put forth their best effort, listen in class, and stay in school.

**Research Question 2: What differences, if any, are there in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express their expectations of their students?**

In my research study, there were no explicit distinctions across the study comparing the two middle school teachers to the two elementary school teachers in this study and how they expressed their expectations of students. Students who seemed to enjoy a stronger relationship with the teacher appeared to be more engaged. Teacher C who was a middle school teacher had the highest level of engagement overall, but both Teachers C and A (elementary school teachers) demonstrated higher engagement with the targeted Black males compared to the targeted White males. Teacher B (elementary school teacher) was more engaged with the higher achieving Black males and higher achieving White males. However, Teacher B allowed some Black males to sleep in class during instruction. Teacher D (middle school teacher) maintained a higher engagement level with White males and low engagement levels with Black males.

Research supports my findings that teacher expectations of students had a direct correlation to strong relationships with teacher and students. Researchers Klem and Connell (2004) further supported my findings on teacher expectations leading to student engagement and strong relationships. Klem and Connell stated, “Students perform better academically if they are engaged in school. Teacher support and expectations play a role in student engagement in school” (p. 262). Engaging students can be accomplished through teachers creating and maintaining a level of teacher-to-student connectedness.
Rist (2000) is another researcher who supports my findings of a strong relationship between student and teacher. Rist suggested when establishing and creating the classroom environment, it is the teacher’s responsibility to nurture and cultivate a conducive-to-learning environment by establishing high expectations for all students, building a rapport with students. For example, when teachers establish high expectations as part of a conducive-to-learning environment, then students are at adequate levels for learning opportunities and academic growth within the classroom. Therefore, students may deliver improved academics. Additionally, a teacher’s interactions with students contribute to the academic achievement of Black male students. This is accomplished when teachers maintain positive and encouraging interactions with all students, especially Black male students.

In my research, teacher and student interviews indicated there are minimal differences in how middle school teachers and elementary school teachers express expectations of their students. This evidence surfaced from the interview data gathered on the code categories. The achievement category was the highest mentioned category for both middle school and elementary school teachers with positive tones recorded as second highest. However, the findings for students during their interviews were different. Students’ most important or top-ranked category was interactions. Interactions lead to positive relationships, which was a common theme among student interviews. Students value relationships. A teacher’s interactions or responses contribute to relationships with students. As supported by research, these relationships are crucial to the achievement of Black male students (Hughes et al., 2012; Roorda et al. 2011; Rashid, 2009). It is very important for teachers to establish a positive relationship to keep Black male students engaged in learning. That engagement directly relates to Black student academic
achievement. According to Davis (2013), the achievement gaps continue to increase as Black males are treated as though they are inferior; therefore, teachers setting high academic expectations for Black males may make a difference.

During classroom observations, independent observers did not view any noticeable differences in middle school and elementary school teachers concerning teacher instruction. The observers recorded all four teachers utilizing cooperative learning groups and giving similar allotted wait time for students to answer teacher-posed questions.

One individual difference observed among the teachers was that a 7th grade teacher expressed her expectations by building rapport with students; however, the other teacher did not build rapport, but was more interested in the curriculum. Also, one 5th grade teacher set very low expectations for the class as a whole, while the other teacher seemed to have focused more on the Black girls and not the rest of the class. These differences teachers have toward various groups of students fall within the category of implicit bias.

Staats (2016) stated, “Implicit biases can also shape teacher expectations of student achievement. A 2010 study examined teachers’ implicit and explicit ethnic biases, finding that their implicit biases were responsible for different expectations of achievement for students from different ethnic backgrounds” (p. 34). It is extremely important for leaders to help teachers to become aware of implicit biases they have within the classroom, because it can interfere with how teachers interact with students. For example, a leader can provide objective feedback to teachers during post-observation conferences. The three observers witnessed implicit biases during the observations, which seemed evident in how teachers interacted with various student populations.
Research Question 3: In what ways do the perceptions of teachers, students, and independent observers compare when describing how teachers’ expectations are expressed?

During classroom observations in this study, there seemed to be a pattern of preferences. In other words, observers noted that each teacher worked better with a certain type of student. Teacher A had established a better rapport with Black females, whereas Teacher B seemed to favor Black, higher-achieving males. Teacher C seemed to have shaped positive relationships with Black males and Teacher D seemed to have maintained positive interactions with White males. Research by Lumsden (1997) supports my findings on teacher expectations and how their expectations contributed to students’ perceptions. Lumsden expressed, “Teachers’ expectations for students—whether high or low—can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, students tend to give to teachers as much or as little as teachers expect of them” (p. 1). Students acquire knowledge through reading, exploring, investigating, and being instructed. Teachers’ perceptions of how their expectations are expressed are similar to students’ perceptions of how teacher expectations are expressed, through interactions and teacher behaviors. Research supports independent observers’ opinion of how teacher expectations are expressed, through reminding students of the rules and justifying their authority.

As a result of the influence teachers had on their students’ perceptions, it is important for teachers to be aware of their biases. My research findings indicate biases teachers seemed to have toward students are directly related to the expectations they have of students. Each of the four teachers in my study had their particular favorite group of students and the less-favored groups seemed to be ignored or sent messages of lowered expectations. Staats’ (2016) research stated various identities we perceive in others based
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upon ethnicity, gender, race, and/or age have galvanized implicit biases. Staats stated that implicit biases were “the attitudes of stereotypes that affected our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. Operated outside the conscious awareness, implicit biases were pervasive, and they challenged even the most well-intentioned and egalitarian-minded individuals, which resulted in actions and outcomes that did not necessarily aligned with explicit intentions” (p. 29). In my study, teachers’ interactions with students were not consistent; there were varied differences in how teachers interacted with students based upon gender and/or ethnic group of students. Black male students seemed to be less favored by three of the four teachers observed. Implicit biases played an integral role in teacher expectations of their students.

Research by DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2011) and Rist (2000) supports my findings on teacher biases. Researchers suggested that teachers’ own prejudices against Black students resulted in lower expectations, which ultimately affected the academic achievement of those Black students. The lower the expectations a teacher possesses for Black students becomes the base-line of where the teacher is striving to take her students academically. When teachers possess biases toward Black students for any reason, but especially due to their race, then it is defaulting on their responsibilities. Teacher biases result in establishing low expectations for any students. In the situation of Black males, with historical biases already at play, such teacher biases can eventually further decrease the academic achievement of Black students.

Surprises

As I conducted my research, there were a few findings that surprised me. The first was that students seemed to be more positive than teachers. The second surprise was how the observers’ perceptions were so negative in comparison to the teachers’ perceptions.
Students more positive. Students seemed to be more positive than teachers were and, of course, this meant that teachers seemed to be more negative than students. Teachers did more blaming. Middle school students elaborated more in answering the interview questions. I was surprised how negative elementary and middle school teachers were in their interviews and interactions. For example, these exemplars from the interviews demonstrate the positivity of students:

- A 5th grade, Black, male student reported, “I feel like you can talk to her (his teacher) on any topic and stuff. So I know that it is right down easy to talk to her.”
- A 7th grade, White, male student shared, “she (his teacher) is one of my top three favorite teachers because she understands me and listens to me when I talk to her, and she helps me with my grades and all that.”
- A 5th grade, Black, male student stated positive interactions with his teacher, “Yes, my teacher, he likes me very much. If we like have our work and be good up there and he’s determined to see that we get the answers right, he (Black male teacher) either smile or give us a high five or give us something to let us know we did a good job.”

However, teachers provided double the negative comments, in this study as highlighted in these exemplars:

- “When you’re in an environment where the majority of the students do not value their education and do not respect authority, then it gets to a situation where students are cheering one another on to be disrespectful,” as described by a White, 7th grade teacher.
- The same teacher indicated, “I daily have kids on the list of priority school (alternative school placement for students who are suspended from their home
school) that I assess and I can just guarantee that there is always at least two or three students in that class that are now out of the class for the day because of those issues.”

- Another example of low expectations came from a Black, 5th grade teacher, who indicated, “We have to push them, this class so much harder to get the work in and to do the work and to understand.

- A 7th grade, White, female teacher blamed behavior, school structure, parents, lack of motivation, and expectations with responses such as this one, “The lack of motivation for some of students and because of the disruption that happens frequently in class, even those students that are motivated, sometimes struggle because there is so much upheaval.”

The research from multiple authors (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher, 2007; Marzano, Davis, Rosenthal, and Jacobson, 2010) promoted the notion that teachers’ classroom structure and teaching style contributes to students maintaining a sense of engagement and connection to their teachers. Students respond well to positive interactions with teachers.

**Implicit bias and expectations.**

Independent observers’ perceptions viewed a deficiency in teachers establishing high expectations for their students in general. In fact, various teachers seemed to favor certain groups of students. I had not considered the idea of implicit bias and was surprised to find that students other than Black males were on the receiving end of teachers’ biases. Implicit biases can shape teacher expectations in areas such as student behavior and student achievement (Staats, 2016). For example, Staats reported research that indicates students of color tend to be sent to the office for more subjective offenses, such as excessive noise.
White students, though, were sent to the office for smoking or vandalism, which are more objective to assess. These same biases can impact the grading of work, especially in areas of more subjective assessments like student essays.

**Conclusions**

Implications for action will be included in the conclusion section of my dissertation. In this section, I will share practical recommendations on how to better serve students, especially Black male students because of this study. Then, following will be my recommendations for future research on teacher expectations and interactions with students. Also, I will share ways in which my study could be improved upon and how the field of education could be enhanced through future research studies.

**Implications for action.** Based upon my research study, the following implications are suggested in hopes of assisting educators to better serve all students. Students benefit from positive interactions with teachers. It is important for teachers to build on positive interactions with students, which can lead to positive relationships between students and teachers.

**Building relationships and positive perceptions.** According to Jussim and Harber (2005), “The accumulation-over-time hypothesis is that a self-fulfilling prophecy process triggered by a perceiver’s expectations at one time continues so that targets conform more and more to the perceiver’s original expectations” (p. 150). In order for teachers to deliberately establish high expectations for students, teachers must consider what subtle behaviors they currently communicate to students through their actions and comments toward students. The subtle messages teachers communicate to students are usually indirect and elusive, but ultimately can be damaging when it comes to establishing high
TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

expectations for Black male students. It is imperative that teachers consider what and how these subtle behaviors or actions they display towards students impact their relationships.

Holloway (2000) also suggested teachers do not know and/or understand the power of motivation and beliefs they possess when standing in front of a class or interacting with a group of students. Teachers may not understand how their expectations for students play a significant role in student achievement. Teachers who view intelligence as dynamic and fluid rather than static and unchanging are less likely to have rigid preconceived notions about what students will or will not be able to achieve. When teachers and administrators maintain high expectations, they encourage in students a desire to aim high rather than to slide by. To expect less is to do students a disservice, not a favor” (Lumsden, 1997, p. 4).

To ensure that all educators establish and maintain a positive learning environment for all students, teachers should strive to develop positive interactions and set high expectations. In order to accomplish these objectives, teachers must get to know their students individually. Teachers have the responsibility to provide equitable educational and student engagement opportunities for Black male students. Teachers need to be aware of these disparities and expect Black male students to be fully engaged in their own learning. Teachers can support their Black male students’ engagement through classroom structure and teaching styles according to Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007).

To assist teachers in getting to know their students and establishing positive interactions, school leaders can utilize researched-based best practices to inform teachers of implicit bias. Informing teachers will allow school leaders to bring about an awareness of implicit bias and build a knowledge base to reduce these biases in classrooms. There are strategies school leaders can implement through the teacher evaluation process, staff meetings, and general one-on-one conversations with teachers. School leaders can use
strategies like providing an open dialogue with teachers to learn about implicit bias and how implicit bias affects students. Through the evaluation process, leaders can provide feedback to teachers with feedback about how they interact with their students.

Change can also occur through professional development. A topic on cultural competency lends itself well to meeting the needs of all students in a classroom. The creation of teacher PLC (Professional Learning Community) groups can support teachers in making changes and sharing successful strategies with each other. To provide a sense of accountability, school leaders can use tools like walk-throughs or the Young rubric in this study to gather data on teacher interactions and monitor classroom changes. School leaders can give feedback to teachers to provide an awareness of their own implicit biases. Teachers can learn how to effectively use wait time, higher level questions, and scaffolding, for example, to project their heightened expectations. Teacher expectations for students in general should become a part of classroom goals with the teacher establishing student expectations as a class and individually. Some examples of teacher expectations may include the expectation of students bringing pencils to class every day, staying in their seats, and improving their scores on assessments. These strategies will increase the likelihood of teachers becoming aware of implicit bias and to change how they previously interacted with their students. This will allow teachers to focus on building positive interactions and setting high expectations for all students.

Motivators and expectations. Teachers seemed to believe that they had to give students extrinsic rewards to motivate them to work closer to their full potential. According to Proctor (1984), teachers have established low expectations for students when they ask them fewer questions, give inadequate feedback, and give them limited time to respond to questions. Other signs that teachers have low expectations of students are when
teachers give more criticism for incorrect responses, give less praise for successful performance, and give fewer positive or non-verbal communications.

**Approaches to countering implicit bias.** Leaders can assist teachers in first being aware of these biases and then providing professional development on ways that implicit bias can be reduced. Staats (2016) confirmed that brains are malleable, so approaches can inhibit implicit biases and support teachers in treating their students more equally. Data can be a powerful tool to combat implicit bias. Staats promoted the use of data, “Because implicit biases function outside conscious awareness, identifying their influence can be challenging. Gathering meaningful data can bring to light trends and patterns in disparate treatment of individuals and throughout an institution that may otherwise go unnoticed” (p. 36). The implication for school leaders is to engage teachers in collecting and analyzing data that would demonstrate which students school-wide are being sent to the office, suspended, or placed in special education classes. Additionally, leaders can gather and discuss individual classroom data with their teachers to highlight which students the teacher is calling on, allowing more wait time for, and engaging with in friendly banter.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This section provides suggestions for future research based on the findings of my study. The first recommendation would be to study the kinds of data that individual teachers and school leaders can gather to create teacher awareness about their individual implicit biases and those biases shared school-wide. What approaches should school leaders take in creating awareness and promoting change? I would hypothesize that any effective process must be non-threatening and collegial, so that teachers do not feel defensive. However, school leaders need to know what kind of data will be beneficial to
gather to inform teachers. Also, the research could include how school leaders should communicate the data to build teacher awareness.

A related recommendation for future research is in the area of effective feedback. Hallinger, Heck, and Murphy (2013) found that useful feedback can be a powerful tool to improve student learning. Leaders can provide authentic, detailed feedback without much time or additional financial resources. What models of feedback delivery can be effectively implemented by school leaders to impact teacher performance in the areas of student engagement, high expectations, and the reduction of implicit bias?

A specific research project that I would recommend would first assess the implicit bias of teachers. An assessment tool, such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT) described by Staats (2016), could be used to measure the unconscious associations an individual may possess that underlie implicit bias. An experimental design could provide a control group of teachers, who would not be given the IAT, with an experimental group who would be given the IAT plus the results of their assessment. Professional development opportunities centered on reducing implicit bias would be provided to both groups. Using tools like Young’s rubric in this study, the researcher could collect data about the classroom changes associated with the control group compared to the experimental group.

In regard to motivation, the observers witnessed teachers motivating students primarily through utilizing extrinsic motivators to encourage students to complete assignments and to be engaged in class. I suggest further research needs to be conducted on the impact extrinsic and intrinsic motivators have on student achievement and at what point do extrinsic motivators, if ever, become intrinsic for students.
Summary

The academic success of students, especially Black male students, hangs in the balance with teachers and educators at the control panel. This dissertation provided awareness about the influence teachers have on student achievement through their positive interactions with students and maintaining high expectations for students. The purpose of Chapter five was to report the findings, share the implications, communicate the surprises, and state the recommendations for future research. In this study, my research design was qualitative utilizing teacher interviews, student interviews, and observations. The interview data and observation data were triangulated.

The purpose of my research was to focus on teacher interactions and expectations of their students. By implementing positive interactions and setting high expectations for all students, teachers can further impact student learning. The concept of positive interactions and high expectations seem to be cliché or simple-minded; however, there are a number of students who DO NOT encounter positive interactions and high expectations from their teachers for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons could include implicit biases, lack of time, unintentional relationships, negative interactions, and low expectations. My closing thought is the reality concerning the self-fulfilling prophecy. Students in this study appeared to be resilient, despite the negative actions and apparent low expectations demonstrated by some of their teachers. If all teachers were able to establish a relationship with their students and communicate consistently high expectations, I am incredibly hopeful that so many more students could fulfill their ultimate level of academic success.
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doi:10.1080/02783190903177598.


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_in_the_United_States_criminal_justice_system


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_inequality_in_the_United_States#Unemployment rates
Teacher Interview Questions for whole class:
1. Please tell me a little about your class. Please tell me a little bit about your school.
2. How long have you taught? How many ELA classes have you taught?
3. How different is this class than your other classes this semester? Year? Previous years?
4. How would you describe your class? What are your general classroom rules and procedures? What are the consequences for breaking classroom rules or procedures?
5. Would you consider your class as high or low functioning achievement?
   a. What is the overall achievement of this class?
6. How do you think the students in this class will perform on State assessments (ISTEP)?
7. What is the greatest challenge with this class?
8. What is your goal for this class? How are student goals set or established?
9. What are your overall class expectations for academic growth? For behaviors?
10. What kinds of strategies or incentives you offer students who show academic growth?
11. What do you find motivates the students in your classroom or in general?
12. When you ask a question, what kind of questions do you ask?
13. When a student does not answer the question asked, what do you do?
14. What happens if a student answers the question incorrectly? When do you move on to the next student?
15. How do you encourage students to improve academically? Behaviorally?
16. In a situation where two students are breaking a classroom or school rule, how do you decide the consequences for each student? What if one of the students is consistently out of their seat? Will both get the same consequence? Please explain
17. How do you inform students that you approve of what they are doing behaviorally and/or academically?
18. How do you think your students feel about you?
19. If there were anything you could change about this class what would it be?
# Appendix – 2

## Seating Chart for Classroom Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key – Question and Answer: Ask Question =</th>
<th>Student Answer =</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Response to Student: Positive Response = +</td>
<td>Negative Response = -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female = F Male = M</td>
<td>Black = B White = W Multi-racial = MR Called on = / tally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Seating Chart Diagram]
Appendix - 3
Observation Rubric for Scripting

Summary of Target Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive &amp; Negative Comments Teachers make to students</th>
<th>The number of times the teacher makes the comment</th>
<th>Positive &amp; Negative Comments Teachers make to students</th>
<th>The number of times the teacher makes the comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Write in Positive and Negative comments the teacher says to the whole class (WC) or to students individually (student’s name).

Positive comments are viewed as encouraging and/or motivating words or phrases made to students. Negative comments are viewed as discouraging and/or non-motivating words or phrases made to students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s</th>
<th>Tally</th>
<th>Young’s</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation / Create -create, invent, plan, compose, construct, design, imagine</td>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings</td>
<td>Synthesis / Evaluate -decide, choose, rate, recommend, assess, justify, prioritize</td>
<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis / Evaluate -decide, choose, rate, recommend, assess, justify, prioritize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis / Analyze -examine, categorize, investigate, identify, contrast, compare, explain</td>
<td>Asks Open-ended questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application / Apply -show, use, complete, classify, examine, solve, illustrate</td>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension/Understand -compare, explain, discuss, restate, summarize, predict, infer, cause/effect, translate, outline, estimate</td>
<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge / Remember -name, describe, relate, find, write, list, tell,</td>
<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collaborates with students to build teamwork</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Justifying authority or power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gives Positive Verbal Praise</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives no verbal praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chapter 3, Flanders’ Interaction Analysis and Bloom’s Taxonomy were reviewed in conjunction with the research to create this observation sheet as a scripting tool to mark to level of teacher questions and/or verbal interactions with students.

**In Chapter 3, Flanders’ Interaction Analysis and Bloom’s Taxonomy were reviewed in conjunction with the research to create this observation sheet as a scripting tool to mark to level of teacher questions and/or verbal interactions with students.**

- Audio record the debriefing conversations between the observers following each observation

H = High (score of 4)  
M = Medium (score of 2.5)  
L = Low (score of 1)  
N = Not Applicable
Table 7

Training Schedule for Conducting Observations (as many as needed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Ball State -TC 9th floor</td>
<td>5:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 28, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Ball State -TC 9th floor</td>
<td>5:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>February 2, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Individual practice</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<td>February 9, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Ball State -TC 9th floor</td>
<td>6:00 – 7:00 p.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 11, 2015</td>
<td>or individually</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick, Young, &amp; Graduate Student</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Ball State -TC 9th floor</td>
<td>5:00 – 6:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 16, 2015</td>
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</table>

**Field Training Notes:**

The three observers met to practice using the observation tools. They watched andcharted: the teacher asking questions to the whole group and to individual students; which students were called on; student’s responses; race and gender of students who were called on positive or negative teacher’s response to student’s answers; teacher’s comments made to students and to the whole class; and the number of times comments are made. The observers stopped the teaching videos and debriefed using the seating chart (Appendix 2) and the observation rubric for scripting (Appendix 3). The debriefing conversation was focused around the scripting level for observations tool (Appendix 4) as a way to focus the conversation and find consensus on what was observed. The first round of field testing led the observers to a consensus on how best to use the observation tools and suggested minor modifications of each tool. Then three observers repeated the field testing steps a second time as additional practice with a better understanding of how to use the observation tools.

The observers agree that obtaining a classroom seating chart prior to the whole class observations will be most beneficial. During the second team training, the observers will field test or practice scripting for the whole class and then using the same video, will script for only two particular students within that classroom. Also, the observers will hold individual practice sessions using the observation tools until each team member feels comfortable. The researcher will field test the observation tools in elementary classrooms, while the other two observers will view tapes separately and then compare/debrief what was observed using each observation tool. The team will then debrief the individual practice sessions.

Field Notes from February 16, 2015: It is hard for one person to capture everything; hard for video because we cannot see the whole class.

Gabe: learned a lot, terms, Bloom’s quantifying behaviors has become easier with practice

Quick: Really need to do train a lot for refining, like quantifying what we did today; not as easy to record as I thought

Dea: training has helped me to debrief and utilize the observation tools more effectively
Appendix - 6

Blank Scripting Sheets for Observer

Sheet 1

Observer’s name _____________________________________________ Date: ________________

Classroom/Teacher being Observed: ___________________________ Grade Level: __________

Scripting Notes:
### Blank Scripting Sheets for Observer

**Sheet 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observer’s name</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom/Teacher being Observed</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Scripting Notes:**
## Blank Scripting Sheets for Observer

**Sheet 3**

Observer’s name ____________________________________________  Date: __________________

Classroom/Teacher being Observed: __________________________ Grade Level: _______

Scripting Notes:
Teacher Interview Questions for particular group of students:

In this interview the focus will be on Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D.

1. Please tell me about Student A? Please tell me about Student B? Please tell me about Student C? and Please tell me about Student D?
2. How would you describe Student A? How would you describe Student B? How would you describe Student C? and How would you describe Student D?
3. Have you had Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D in class before?
4. What would you say Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D? behaviors are in class?
5. Please describe a recent interaction you have had with Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D?
6. What works to motivate Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D?
7. What strategies do you use to ensure you are consistent in enforcing the classroom rules and procedures?
8. What goals have you set for Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D?
9. What are your expectations for Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D academically?
10. How does Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D know when you are pleased with their actions?
11. What strategies or incentives do you use to for Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D when he shows academic growth?
12. How do you encourage Student A, Student B, and Student C to improve academically?
13. How do you motivate Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D?
14. How have you built a rapport with Student A? Student B? Student C? and Student D? Can you share a recent example that would demonstrate that level of rapport with him?
15. Do you think Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D will succeed academically?
Appendix –8

Student Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about school. What classes are you taking this semester? What is your favorite class? Why?
2. Tell me about your ELA class. Tell me about your classroom.
3. Tell me about your ELA teacher.
4. Have you had Teacher X before this semester? If so, how did you do in Teacher X’s classroom?
5. In general, is Teacher X a teacher your friends wish to have?
6. What are the academic expectations in your class? Behavioral expectations?
7. How does Teacher X tell you what he/she expects from you academically? Behaviorally?
8. How do you know your teacher is pleased with your actions? Please explain.
10. Does your teacher motivate you in the same way he/she motivates the rest of the class? Please explain.
11. What incentives or strategies does your teacher use to help you show academic improvement?
13. How does your teacher encourage you to improve in your school work?
14. How is your rapport with your teacher? In other words, how do you get along with your teacher?
15. Explain your interactions with your teacher.
16. Does your teacher interact the same or differently to the other students as she does to you?
17. Do you think your teacher likes you? Please explain.
18. Does your teacher set high expectations for the class?
19. Does your teacher set high expectations for you individually?
Appendix – 9

Semi-scripted interview protocols

(Established prior to interviews)
### Appendix –10
Teacher Interview Code
(to keep teacher names confidential)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code</th>
<th>Teacher Interview</th>
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<td>B 1, B 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Before observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 5 &amp; B 6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Before observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Before observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Before observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>D 6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>After observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 12</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>After observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>D 18 &amp; 19</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>After observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 21</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>After observation</td>
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</table>

### Appendix –11
Student Interviews
(to keep student names confidential)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code</th>
<th>Student Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>D 2</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>D 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>D 22</td>
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# TEACHER EXPECTATIONS OF BLACK MALES

## Appendix –12

Tally Sheet to compile all three observers’ data

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<td>D / G / M</td>
<td>D / G / M</td>
<td>D / G / M</td>
<td>D / G / M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accepts &amp; empathizes with students’ feelings</td>
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<td>Ignores or puts down students’ feelings</td>
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<td>Asks Open-ended questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asks closed-ended questions</td>
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<td>Allows wait time (how long) for an answer response</td>
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<td>Moves on immediately for the next child to answer (little wait time)</td>
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